KING KONG

Screenplay by

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From an idea conceived by

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EXT. SKIES OVER FRANCE 1917 - DAY

CAMERA drifts towards a large puffy cloud floating 6000ft above the French countryside ...

... a roar of engines - sounding like angry buzzing bees - and three ... six ... NINE SOPWITH CAMEL FIGHTER PLANES emerge from the cloud, flying in tight formation. These are frail looking, but deadly single seat BIPLANES, each armed with twin Vickers machine guns. The height of 1917 aircraft design, built for the sole purpose of blasting German planes out of the skies.

SUPER: "FRANCE 1917"

JACK DRISCOLL and his buddy, MATT HAMMON are flying two of the CAMELS at the rear of the formation.

MATT is nervously CHEWING GUM ... he tries to BLOW a BUBBLE, but the slipstream flattens it against his GOGGLES! JACK laughs.

Sudden MACHINE GUN FIRE ... The SQUADRON LEADER has fired his guns to attract the attention of all his pilots. He gestures down ...

JACK looks down ... 3 large GERMAN BOMBERS, esorted by 6 sleek ALBATROS fighters are heading towards Allied lines, about 1000 feet below.

With a wave of the SQUADRON LEADER'S arm, the NINE CAMELS peel away towards the GERMAN PLANES. The fun is over for JACK and MATT as they grimly steer their planes into the steep dive ... WOOD CREAKS, WIRE WHISTLES as the CAMELS shudder against the wind resistance. Wings sometimes crumple like matchwood in dives as steep as this. JACK squints as he lines up an ALBATROS in his gunsights. The Germans have not spotted the FAST APPROACHING CAMELS ...

The Camel Pilots OPEN FIRE almost simultaneously - 18 MACHINE GUNS send yellow TRACER BULLETS ripping into the German planes. Within seconds, 3 ALBATROS are destroyed: One spins away in flames, another literally collapses under a hail of bullets and the third collides with one of the BOMBERS, causing both planes to tumble out of the sky.

It's a turkey shoot as the CAMELS fly through the German formation, turning sharply to attack again before the enemy pilots can recover.

TRACER FIRE rips into JACK'S PLANE ... He SPINS AROUND, confronted with a TERRIFYING SIGHT!

The 24 gaudily painted FOKKER TRIPLANES of VON RICHTOFEN'S FLYING CIRCUS are diving down towards them. The hunters have just become THE HUNTED! Before JACK can react, the TRIPLANES swoop into the dogfight ...

The sky is suddenly filled with nearly 50 planes wheeling around in a desperate life and death struggle. From a distance they look like a swarm of angry bees against a spectacular backdrop of cumulous cloud rising in towering columns.

Close in, it's stomach churning, noisy and violent as terrified pilots throw their planes around the sky in a frenzied attempt to blast bullets into each other. You may have seen movie dogfights before, but you haven't seen one like this!

JACK wrenches the control stick, sending his Camel through a series of TIGHT TURNS, wincing as BOILING CASTOR OIL from the rotary engine SLAPS INTO HIS FACE ... there are so many planes that collision is as threatening as the deadly TRACER FIRE that zips in all directions.

CRRUMMPP! MATT'S plane collides with a crippled TRIPLANE and goes into an immediate spin. MATT tries to regain control ... his right hand wingtip is in tatters.

JACK sees his buddy going down and dives after him, blasting at a COUPLE OF TRIPLANES that are closing in on the crippled CAMEL.

MATT uses all his strength to haul the control stick back and pull out of the dive. He is dangerously close to the ground - the shell-torn landscape of NO MAN'S LAND. MATT levels as he loses his last few feet of height and SMASHES INTO THE GROUND.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - DAY

JACK carefully guides HIS PLANE between shell holes and MANAGES a BUMPY, but SUCCESSFUL LANDING!

JACK rips off his HELMET & GOGGLES - he is 19 years old. He leaps out of his plane as BULLETS whizz all around.

MATT'S PLANE is a BROKEN PILE OF SPLINTERED WOOD and CANVAS at the bottom of a deep BOMB CRATER in an ABANDONED TRENCH SYSTEM.

JACK dives into the CRATER ...

JACK
(distraught)
Matt???

MATT GROANS! He is alive, but TRAPPED DEEP in the TANGLE OF WRECKAGE.

MATT
(groaning)
My leg! Jesus Jack! I've broken my leg!

JACK tries to pull BITS of the SMASHED PLANE away, but the whole thing is an impossible tangle of wood and wire.

JACK
Hang on, Matt! I won't be long!

MATT
I'm scared, Jack! ...I don't wanna die.

JACK
(reassuring)
Hey! Trust me!

JACK races into the ABANDONED TRENCHES - a nightmare of MUD, EQUIPMENT and CORPSES. He finds a pair of WIRECUTTERS ... pulls a SHOVEL out from under a CORPSE ... and races back towards the WRECKAGE.

PUSH IN: as JACK suddenly FREEZES in HORROR ... 6 British TANKS are advancing across No Man's Land - one of them heading STRAIGHT FOR THE WRECKAGE!!!

JACK desperately HACKS and CHOPS at the WRECKAGE with the SHOVEL ... it ain't working ...

MATT
(worried)
Jack? What's happening?

JACK
(panicked)
It's ok! You'll be ok!

15 feet above JACK, on the LIP of the CRATER, the TANK appears, inching slowly forward ... EARTH CRUMBLES beneath it. JACK waves his arms frantically.

JACK
(yelling)
No!!!

The British MkIV TANK of 1917 was a roaring metal slug with virtually no driver visibility. The TANK is about to TIP FORWARD, down the side of the CRATER - right onto top of the WRECKAGE ... and MATT. He cannot see the TANK.

MATT
(panicked scream)
What's happening, Jack? Jack!

The TANK TIPS FOWARD ...

JACK
(screaming)
No!!!

MATT and the WRECKAGE disappear under TONS of CRAWLING METAL ... JACK SCREAMS uncontrollably as the TANK RUMBLES PAST ...

IMAGE SLOWS DOWN ... turns to GRAINY BLACK & WHITE: JACK sinks to his knees, CRYING TEARS of GRIEF ...

TILT UP: to the SKY ... SEVERAL DOGFIGHTING AEROPLANES are circling above JACK. His O.S SCREAMS dissolve into BIRD CALLS as ...

EXT. SUMATRAN HARBOR - DAY

... the AEROPLANES transform into BEAUTIFUL TROPICAL BIRDS!

TILT DOWN ... to REVEAL a LARGE TRAMP STEAMER "The VENTURE" gliding towards SUMATRAN DOCKS - a crowded series of wharves where NATIVE OUTRIGGERS and FISHING BOATS compete for space with rusting COASTAL TRADERS.

Amongst the junk that litters the harbor: an old AVRO SEAPLANE - beached on the muddy banks ... canvas ripped, wings broken.

WIDE ... The HARBOR is nestled in a pretty bay surrounded by RUGGED MOUNTAINS.

SUPER: "16 YEARS LATER"

SUPER: "SUMATRA 1933"

EXT. SUMATRAN DOCKS - DAY

A Tin-Pot SUMATRAN BAND strikes up an out-of-tune version of "DIXIE" as CARL DENHAM strides down the VENTURE'S GANGPLANK.

DENHAM is in his 40's ... energetic, charming, ambitious - a film maker in the old showman tradition.

Mr SELAMAT GINTING, the local DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, steps forward thrusting a GARLAND OF FLOWERS over DENHAM'S HEAD. DENHAM pumps MR GINTING'S HAND.

DENHAM
Hi, Carl Denham ... How's it going? Wonderful to be here!

MR GINTING
(carefully practiced)
We welcome you, Mr Denham! We celebrate the bonding of our cultures ... the peoples of Sumatra unite in friendship with the peoples of Hollywoodland!

DENHAM
(distracted)
Great ... great ... Where's the transport?

MR GINTING
Transport arranged for tomorrow morning. Today we have welcome and songs at our new school!

DENHAM
No, no - you don't get it ... I'm on a schedule here. I'm leaving tomorrow - I gotta shoot these archeological ruins like today! I gotta get six people and a shit-load of camera equipment into the mountains!

SOUND OF LOUD TRUCK HORN ... A TRUCK, fully laden with SAWN LOGS is trying to drive onto the NARROW WHARF.

JACK DRISCOLL leans out of the CAB, yelling at DENHAM and MR GINTING. JACK is now in his early 30's ... He has not lost his boyish looks, but years of tropical sun has darkened his skin.

JACK
(yelling)
Are you getting out of the way, or am I gonna have to tune your violins?

He edges the TRUCK towards the BAND ... "DIXIE" falls apart as the BAND MEMBERS grab their instruments and SCATTER.

DENHAM watches the TRUCK - his eyes light up..

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMATRAN VILLAGE - DAY

JACK'S TRUCK rumbles through a DUSTY VILLAGE, heading towards the MOUNTAINS. 2 of DENHAM'S CREW are perched on the back of the TRUCK amid BOXES OF CAMERA GEAR.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

JACK is driving, with DENHAM sitting beside him.

JACK
Last motion picture I saw was in 1916 ... Charlie Chaplin.

JACK CHUCKLES at the memory ...

JACK (CONT'D)
Is that guy still making pictures? He was real funny!

DENHAM
Yeah, yeah ... but public taste has changed. People want action, thrills - real life adventure .. like my last picture: "Mud Men of the Moodabe Delta".

JACK
(dryly)
What's that? A romantic comedy?

DENHAM
(terse)
I make documentaries ... a "Carl Denham Picture" means a thrilling journey into exotic worlds the public can only dream about!

JACK raises his eyebrows.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
So, tell me Jack ... have you been up to the site of this lost city?

JACK shakes his head.

JACK
Can't say I have ... I've got a thousand acres of rain forest to clear before the monsoon hits.

EXT. RAVAGED HILLSIDE - DAY

The TRUCK winds up a NARROW MOUNTAIN ROAD through barren hillsides of RAVAGED FOREST.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

DENHAM whistles ...

DENHAM
You boys have been busy!

DENHAM suddenly REACTS WITH ALARM!

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(alarmed)
Whoa!! Body on the road!

The TRUCK drives towards a DARK FIGURE sprawled on the ROAD AHEAD, next to a FELLED TREE.

JACK shakes his head.

JACK
(disinterested)
Orangutang ... Goddamn monkeys - they piss me off.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE - DAY

A UNION JACK flutters from a makeshift flagpole above a GROUP OF TENTS ... on the SHORE of a SMALL LAKE, nestled in a BASIN-like valley. 8 BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGISTS are busy, working amongst the FALLEN STONE RUINS of an ancient civilization ...

We follow an attractive young English woman in her early 20's as she weaves her way through the RUINS ... ANN DARROW wears baggy khaki trousers and a cotton shirt. Her LONG BLONDE hair is tied back in a pony tail.

LORD DARROW (O.S)
(yelling)
Ann!

LORD LINWOOD DARROW is supervising the packing of ARTIFACTS into CRATES labelled "BRITISH MUSEUM". He is in his late 70's, but still cuts a dashing figure. He TOSSES ANN a COIL OF ELECTRICAL WIRE.

LORD DARROW (CONT'D)
Get this down to Bayliss ... he's setting the charges.

ANN takes the COIL of WIRE and hurries through the RUINS.

The RUINS are dotted around areas of the LAKE SHORE - which mostly rises steeply out of the water as rocky cliffs. The LAKE is a little smaller than a football field ... a HIGH WATERFALL empties out of the valley through a narrow opening in the cliffs.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

STEVE BAYLISS - A BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGIST - is crouched below the WATERFALL, sweat rolling from his brow. He is gingerly placing STICKS OF GELIGNITE into ROCK CAVITIES.

He senses ANN out of the corner of his eye ...

STEVE
(quietly)
At this point you don't want to sneeze or fart.

ANN hands STEVE the COIL OF WIRE ...

ANN
(wryly)
Controlled explosions only, please Steve.

STEVE wires a DETONATOR into the GELIGNITE ... he suddenly FREEZES as JACK'S TRUCK RUMBLES close-by, heading towards the CAMP.

STEVE
(tense)
Who the hell is that?

ANN
(puzzled)
It's a logging truck ...

STEVE
For Christsake, shut that road down!

STEVE starts unrolling the wire ...

STEVE (CONT'D)
You've got three minutes ...

EXT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE - DAY

DENHAM hops out of the cab as his CREW unload the CAMERA GEAR. HERB - the CAMERAMAN - is middle-aged, steadfastly loyal, and walks with a pronounced LIMP. JOSH - his ASSISTANT - is 17 years old.

DENHAM hands JACK a FEW BANK NOTES ...

DENHAM
Thanks, Buddy!

LORD DARROW approaches.

LORD DARROW
Mr Denham? You're just in time ... I suggest you set your cameras up on the bluff over there.

LORD DARROW points to a ROCKY OUT-CROP overlooking the LAKE.

DENHAM shakes LORD DARROW'S HAND warmly.

DENHAM
Your Lordship ... it's an honor to meet you, sir. I'm a great fan of all your discoveries! I really want to work closely with you on this incredible find.

JACK is driving away from the CAMP ... heading back down the road.

EXT. CAMP ROAD - DAY

JACK FROWNS as ANN comes running up the ROAD towards him.

ANN
(urgent)
Stop! This road's closed!

JACK stops ... leans out.

JACK
I just drove up here two minutes ago!

ANN
(urgent)
Reverse up the hill ... Quick! There's going to be a -

KAABOOM!!! The GROUND TREMBLES, throwing ANN against the side of JACK'S TRUCK.

EXT. LAKE SIDE - DAY

DENHAM'S jaw drops as he watches a COLUMN OF WATER rise hundreds of feet into the air!

DENHAM
Holy shit!

The NARROW LIP at the mouth of the LAKE BASIN CRUMBLES AWAY, releasing a TORRENT of WATER into the LOWER VALLEY.

HERB is FILMING.

LORD DARROW'S eyes BLAZE IN TRIUMPH!

EXT. CAMP ROAD - DAY

ROCKY DEBRIS and WATER rains down on JACK'S TRUCK as he leaps out and hurries over to ANN ... she lies DAZED on the road.

JACK
Are you ok?

Before JACK can reach ANN, she staggers to her feet and RUNS towards the CAMP!

JACK
(yelling)
Hey!

JACK watches her go ... INTRIGUED. He shakes his head and turns back to his TRUCK.

EXT. LAKE SIDE - DAY

LORD DARROW is AWESTRUCK as he watches the WATER LEVEL of the LAKE rapidly drop ...

ANN arrives at his side ... takes hold of his arm.

ANN
(excited)
Father!

An AMAZING SIGHT: ALGAE covered TEMPLES and STATUES are slowly revealed by the receeding water level!

The LAKE was concealing an incredible DROWNED TEMPLE ... An ancient wonder built into the CLIFF FACES of a DEEP VALLEY!

LORD DARROW is TREMBLING ... His eyes WATER UP.

LORD DARROW
(emotional)
My God ... it's the temple.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

LOOKING UP FROM the BOTTOM of the LAKE ... now COMPLETELY DRAINED.

ELABORATE STATUES and BUILDINGS rise into the air. The STYLE is unusual ... As advanced as the INCAS or EGYPTIANS, but with flowing GAUDI-like lines. A strange mix of STONE, BRONZE and LARGE BONES is incorporated into the architecture.

Everything is COATED with SLIMEY ALGAE and long tendrils of LAKE WEED.

EXT. OLD LAKE SHORE - DAY

DENHAM turns away from the BASIN, eyes shining with greed.

DENHAM
Jesus Christ! This is going to make us a fortune!

HERB grins as he PANS HIS CAMERA across the spectacular VISTA.

HERB
Looks pretty good to me, Mr Denham!

The CLIFF WALLS rise nearly vertically ... 100 feet towards the old lake surface. A VERY STEEP STONE STAIRCASE provides ACCESS to the interior basin.

LORD DARROW, ANN, STEVE, SEVERAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS and SUMATRAN LABORERS carefully descend down this STAIRCASE, supported by ROPES. DENHAM follows, a few feet behind ... JOSH helps HERB carry the CAMERA GEAR.

... They look like ANTS against the vast MONUMENTS.

INT. TEMPLE CAVERN - DAY

WIDE SHOT ... From the inside of a HUGE DOORWAY. The TINY FIGURES are SILHOUETTED against the light. Long TENTRILS OF WEED hang down, still dripping.

CLOSER ON: LORD DARROW ... SLOW PUSH IN towards his AWESTRUCK FACE as he looks PAST CAMERA. The OTHERS group behind him, EQUALLY AMAZED!

ANGLE ON: The INTERIOR of a CATHEDRAL-LIKE TEMPLE, carved into the CLIFF FACE at the bottom of the BASIN.

In the center of the TEMPLE is a large 20 ft STATUE OF A FRIGHTENING APE-LIKE ANIMAL ... FACE SNARLING with fearsome rage ... bristled fur, taloned hands. It is positioned atop a bed of REAL HUMAN SKULLS, intergrated into the STATUE. The base of the STATUE is inscribed with HIEROGLYPHIC-like ART and DIAGRAMS.

The GROUP are STUNNED INTO SILENCE ... until LORD DARROW speaks, his voice ECHOED in the cavernous chamber.

LORD DARROW
(whisper)
Good God ... I don't believe it.

LOW ANGLE ... LORD DARROW turns to face the OTHERS, the STATUE looming in the frame behind him. The old man's face shines with OBSESSIVE INTENSITY.

LORD DARROW (CONT'D)
(creepy)
Behold ... the Beast God ... KONG!

SUMATRAN LABORERS instinctively BACK AWAY.

SUMATRAN LABORER
(terrified)
Kong ...

LORD DARROW
(creepy)
Worshipped by a savage race ... "Talak e a Kong" The Cult of the Beast God was systematically hunted down and killed by the Hindu. No likeness of Kong was allowed to survive. All trace of the culture was eliminated ... as if it had never existed.

SILENCE ...

DENHAM
(loudly)
That's great your Lordship! Now, if you wouldn't mind - just repeat that and we'll get it from another angle ... exact same words, please!

ANN spins around ...

DENHAM
What? What did I say?

She points past DENHAM'S shoulder.

ANN
The laborers!

THE OTHERS look up in time to see the SUMATRAN LABORERS scurrying up the staircase as fast as they can.

LORD DARROW turns to an ARCHAEOLOGIST ...

LORD DARROW
(urgent)
Dougie! Send a wire to the Home Office. They need to contact the Sumatran Goverment as soon as possible ... this thing could get out of hand. Quick now!

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

The TEMPLE BASIN is lit by ELECTRICAL LIGHTS, powered by a distant generator. The SPARSE LIGHTING and DRAMATIC SHADOWS invest the site with an EERIE GRANDEUR.

TRUCKS are being driven directly into the BASIN, via the NARROW FISSURE created by the explosion.

ARCHEOLOGISTS are working quickly, MEASURING, PHOTOGRAPHING, SKETCHING. LORD DARROW directs operations with a wave of his WALKING STICK.

DENHAM, HERB and his CREW are busy FILMING.

DOUGIE suddenly appears from inside the TEMPLE ... he GESTURES to LORD DARROW, clearly not wanting to ATTRACT ATTENTION ... LORD DARROW hurries into the TEMPLE.

CLOSE ON: DENHAM observing ... he casually strolls towards the TEMPLE ENTRANCE ...

INT. TEMPLE CAVERN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: ANN'S HANDS ... skillfully producing an accurate PENCIL RUBBING of a HIEROGLYPHICAL PANEL at the base of the KONG STATUE.

WIDE: A SINGLE LIGHT glows dimly in the VAST CHAMBER, creepily UNDER-LIGHTING the KONG STATUE ... LORD DARROW and DOUGIE lean over ANN - their WHISPERED VOICES AMPLIFIED by the CAVERN.

ANN
It looks like a map ... "Pul ... Pulau ...

ANN looks up at LORD DARROW, REALISATION dawning on her face.

LORD DARROW
What?

ANN
"Pulau Tengkorak ... The Island of the Skull"! There are navigational co-ordinates in Sanskrit ...

LORD DARROW
(scoffs)
There can't be an uncharted island - not in nineteen thirty-three! It's a myth!

LORD DARROW glances at DOUGIE ... he SHRUGS. ANN stands, holding the finished RUBBING - an accurate TRACING PAPER reproduction of the MAP.

ANN
(quietly)
Kong was a myth until ten o'clock this morning.

LORD DARROW stares at ANN ... taking in the enormity of the suggestion.

A LOOMING SHADOW slides over the wall behind them ... they SPIN AROUND!

DENHAM is strolling towards them. He LIGHTS a CIGARETTE as LORD DARROW takes the MAP ... folding it as casually as possible.

LORD DARROW
(casually)
Getting some good shots, old man?

DENHAM'S eyes are glued to the FOLDED MAP as LORD DARROW slides it into his TOP POCKET.

DENHAM
(quietly)
It couldn't be better, your Lordship.

EXT. TEMPLE BASIN - NIGHT

DENHAM strolls out of TEMPLE CAVERN ... he heads towards HERB, DEEP IN THOUGHT ...

TWO POWERFUL SEARCHLIGHTS suddenly SWING onto the SITE from the TOP of the CLIFFS ...

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE!!! MILITARY VEHICLES roar through into the BASIN! 100 SUMATRAN SOLDIERS spill out of several trucks - they stream through the site, YELLING and roughly herding ARCHEOLOGISTS into the glare of the lights.

SOLDIERS
(yelling)
Raise your hands! Round up ... round up!

LORD DARROW rushes out of the TEMPLE, followed up ANN and DOUGIE ...

LORD DARROW
(horrified)
What is the meaning of this?

The Sumatran COLONEL IN CHARGE steps up.

COLONEL
No more permit! You go home!

SKETCHES and PAPERS are being TORN UP ... an ARMOURED CAR rams a 15 foot STATUE, smashing it into the ground. SOLDIERS hurry across the TEMPLE BASIN, carrying EXPLOSIVES.

LORD DARROW
(pleading)
You can't destroy these things!

The COLONEL looks at LORD DARROW with a steely gaze ...

COLONEL
(quietly)
Some things better left alone.

DENHAM is ESCORTED up to the COLONEL by a COUPLE OF SOLDIERS.

DENHAM
Carl Denham ... I'm an American!

DENHAM offers his HAND ... quietly passing a WAD OF US BANK NOTES to the COLONEL! DENHAM grins and turns to HERB, who is carrying the CAMERA & TRIPOD on his shoulder.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Pack up the gear, Herb ... we're outta here!

The COLONEL glances at the BANK NOTES ... he angrily THROWS THEM DOWN, BARKING ORDERS in SUMATRAN ...

The SIDES of a MILITARY TRUCK swing down revealing a HEAVY MACHINE GUN! HERB just manages to dive clear as the CAMERA & TRIPOD are SHOT TO PIECES!

DENHAM
(screaming)
No!!

DENHAM leaps on the COLONEL in a sudden FRENZY, PUNCHING HIM VIOLENTLY! Within seconds, DENHAM has been hauled off by SOLDIERS ... he is BEATEN with RIFLE BUTTS.

KABOOM!!! An HUGE EXPLOSION blasts out of the TEMPLE ENTRANCE as the KONG STATUE is BLOWN INTO A 1000 PIECES!!!

ANN comforts LORD DARROW, who slowly sinks to his knees in SHOCK ... SOLDIERS roughly pull them apart and drag them towards a TRUCK.

COLONEL
Everyone under our protection. You will be escorted to airfield in the morning for plane home. No more permit!

LORD DARROW starts GASPING FOR AIR.

ANN
(worried)
Father!!! Stop - he's sick!

ANN tries to go to him, but is RESTRAINED ...

The SOLDIERS continue dragging LORD DARROW as he CONVULSES horribly ... a violent SPASM sends him slipping out of their grasp and thudding to the ground, white FLECKS OF FOAM oozing out of his mouth.

ANN breaks free and rushes over ... she cradles her father's head in her lap.

ANN
(panicked)
Somebody help me! Help me!

DENHAM staggers over ... he is BRUISED and BLEEDING. He kneels over LORD DARROW, placing his hand on the old man's chest. DENHAM looks up at ANN, shaking his head.

DENHAM
I'm sorry ...

ANN
(shocked)
No!

ANN bursts into tears ... DENHAM is HAULED AWAY as ANN falls on her FATHER'S BODY, SOBBING with GRIEF.

DENHAM (O.S)
(struggling)
Hey! That's mine!

ANN looks up ... DENHAM is struggling with 2 SOLDIERS. He has the FOLDED MAP IN HIS HAND! She watches as the MAP FALLS TO THE GROUND ...

SLOW MOTION: The MAP slowly rolls past her father's body, UNFOLDING in the gentle breeze.

SUDDENLY! DENHAM wrestles a SOLDIER'S RIFLE away ... He rams the butt into the COLONEL'S stomach, smashes another SOLDIER across the chin ...

In a flash, DENHAM has SNATCHED UP THE MAP, and DIVED into an empty ARMORED CAR!

CONFUSION ERUPTS! SOLDIERS SHOOT wildly at DENHAM as he slams the DOOR SHUT. Bullets RICOCHET off the ARMORED CAR ... DENHAM guns the engine and SPEEDS AWAY! He steers a course past HERB and JOSH, giving them just enough time to leap on before he ROARS THROUGH THE CUTTING!

SOLDIERS stream away, firing into the darkness, leaving ANN alone with her father's body.

SLOW MOTION: SOLDIERS run past an EMPTY TRUCK ... PUSH IN: on KEYS swinging in the ignition.

SLOW MOTION: ANN, her face TEAR-STAINED, but strangely IMPASSIVE slowly rises. She walks away from her father's body ... towards the TRUCK.

EXT. CUTTING - NIGHT

A CROWD of SOLDIERS shoot uselessly at the fleeing ARMORED CAR as it becomes a SPECK in the distance. The COLONEL BARKS ANGRY ORDERS and the SOLDIERS race back towards their VEHICLES ... They suddenly SCATTER in ALL DIRECTIONS! ANN ROARS PAST behind the wheel of the TRUCK! She speeds away after the ARMORED CAR!!!

EXT. LOGGING CAMP - NIGHT

All is QUIET at the LOGGING CAMP ... The place has just SHUT DOWN for the night. A LIGHT GLOWS from JACK'S CABIN - just off the side of the road ... on a SHARP CORNER.

INT. JACK'S CABIN - NIGHT

JACK is trying to light an old COAL RANGE in the corner of his spartan one-room CABIN. He wears a WOOLLY HAT, PAJAMAS - and on this cold night - his old FLYING JACKET.

He suddenly FROWNS as vehicle HEADLIGHTS throw a crazily swaying BEAM through his window. Before JACK can react, the ARMORED CAR slides - out of control - THROUGH THE SIDE OF HIS CABIN!

JACK flattens himself against the wall, as the ARMORED CAR MISSES HIM BY INCHES, sending a shower of SPLINTERED TIMBERS and GLASS flying in all directions!

The ARMORED CAR swings back onto the road ... JACK races after it, watching helplessly as it SPEEDS AWAY. He stands in the MIDDLE OF THE ROAD, surveying his DEMOLISHED CABIN.

JACK

Shit!

AT THAT MOMENT! ANN'S truck races out of the DARKNESS, headlights OFF. JACK spins around, FROZEN in the MIDDLE OF THE ROAD as she slams on the BRAKES! The TRUCK slews to an abrupt STOP.

JACK reacts with SURPRISE when ANN leans out of the CAB!

ANN
(urgent yell)
Get out of the bloody way!

JACK raises his hands in MOCK SURRENDER ... he SLOWLY STEPS OFF THE ROAD.

SUDDENLY ... MACHINE GUN FIRE whips around them! SEVERAL MILITARY VEHICLES are speeding down the hill! GUNS BLAZING!

ANN FLOORS IT ... mud flies up from the SPINNING WHEELS as her TRUCK moves away down the road ... BULLETS kick up the dirt around JACK'S FEET - they are shooting at him!

Without hesitation, he bounds after ANN'S TRUCK, throwing himself onto the TRAY as she PICKS UP SPEED!

INT. ANN'S TRUCK/JUNGLE ROAD - NIGHT

ANN reacts with ALARM as the PASSENGER DOOR is suddenly pulled open and JACK swings into the cab ... his PAJAMAS splattered with mud.

JACK
You could've given me time to change!

SMASH! A BULLET shatters the REAR WINDOW as SUMATRAN MILITARY CARS speed up behind them!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

The CHASE ACCELERATES down a narrow MOUNTAIN ROAD ... ANN throws her TRUCK around corners with recklessness.

ANN is well ahead of the MILITARY VEHICLES as they reach the bottom of the hill, racing on a DIRT ROAD beside a MUDDY RIVER ... JACK looks back through the SMASHED WINDOW ... ANN FAILS TO TAKE A SHARP CORNER ...

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

The TRUCK flies off the road, SPLASHING INTO THE RIVER!

JACK and ANN brace themselves as the TRUCK lurches to a halt ... It lies HALF SUBMERGED in the RIVER beside an old WOODEN PIER. The WATER LEVEL around settles around THEIR CHESTS.

MILITARY VEHICLES roar past ... JACK turns to ANN.

JACK
You wanna tell me what we're doing here in this river?

ANN
(upset)
I'm sorry ... I just ... I just ... Shit!

ANN punches the DASH and starts to sob.

JACK
Hey! Take it easy ... we've got enough water in here.

ANN buries her head in her hands ...

ANN
(quietly)
My father ... died tonight.

JACK
Oh, shit ... sorry. Trust my big mouth.

Just as JACK says "big mouth": a huge gaping CROCODILE MOUTH suddenly LUNGES at him! It's JAWS SNAPPING at the SIDE WINDOW inches behind his head!

Another SNAPPING CROCODILE HEAD thrusts in through ANN'S OPEN WINDOW. She falls back into JACK'S LAP ... The CROC'S shoulders are too wide for the window - it gets wedged, SNAPPING at ANN, inches short of her nose! Within seconds, MORE CROCODILES descend on the TRUCK, CLAWING the WINDSCREEN - it threatens to break under the strain.

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM plays on the TRUCK ... TWO SOLDIERS approach holding RIFLES.

JACK
(desperate yell ... INDONESIAN with sub-titles)
Shoot them!

SOLDIER 1 aims his rifle at a CROC, but SOLDIER 2 BARKS AN ORDER and pushes the rifle away - a SADISTIC GRIN on his face!!!

JACK and ANN huddle together, their mouths at water level, TEETH SNAPPING ALL AROUND THEM. JACK can see the TWO SOLDIERS through the SIDE MIRROR .. they're ENJOYING THE SHOW - cracking a private JOKE.

JACK
(yelling ... INDONESIAN with sub-titles)
Come here!

The TWO SOLDIERS don't respond.

JACK (CONT'D)
(yelling ... INDONESIAN with sub-titles)
I said come here! I've got twenty grand stashed in a Singapore Bank. I don't have a will ... I want you to have it!

As JACK speaks, he is GASPING FOR AIR and SPITTING OUT WATER ... The TWO SOLDIERS WARILY APPROACH, their rifles trained on JACK.

JACK (CONT'D)
(INDONESIAN with sub-titles)
I want you and your families to get some reward from my lifetime of hard work.

JACK'S POV: The TWO SOLDIERS edge closer along the PIER - totally prepared for any trick JACK might pull ... Behind them - A HUGE FAT CROC has climbed the river bank and is WALKING STEALTHILY onto the pier!!!

JACK (CONT'D)
(INDONESIAN with sub-titles)
Royal Bank of Singapore ... Ask for Mr Sanyun Khan. I'll give you the account number ...

THE SOLDIERS NOD ... The FAT CROC is getting near, but moving VERY SLOWLY. ANN too is watching the approaching CROC through the MIRROR. A SNAPPING CROC nips JACK'S shoulder, DRAWING BLOOD. He gasps ...

JACK (CONT'D)
(INDONESIAN with sub-titles)
One ... Seven ... Guys! Write the damn thing down!

SOLDIER 1 lowers his rifle and pulls a NOTEPAD out of his pocket - just as ...

THE FAT CROC CHARGES! He covers the last few feet moving at LIGHTNING SPEED. He takes SOLDIER 2 in his JAWS and with a FLICK of his TAIL, sweeps SOLDIER 1 INTO THE WATER!

EN MASS, the CROCS leave the TRUCK and descend on the THRASHING SOLDIERS like a PACK OF PIRANHAS.

ANN and JACK quickly wade to the bank, the water behind them a CHURNING MAELSTROM!

They hurry over to the SOLDIER'S VEHICLE ... JACK jumps behind the wheel ... ANN climbs in picking a military PISTOL up off the seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMATRAN HABOR - DAWN

The "VENTURE" is STEAMING AWAY from the DOCKS - SMOKE shoots out of it's FUNNEL as the boiler pressure rises ... The ORANGE LIGHT of DAWN fills the sky.

EXT. SUMATRAN DOCKS - DAWN

JACK and ANN drive up and run onto the DOCK ... They look filthy, bruised and very tired. ANN watches in despair as the "VENTURE" leaves the HARBOR MOUTH.

ANN
(urgent)
Where do I charter a boat?

JACK
There's nothing fast enough to catch that. Forget it. It's over.

JACK turns and walks away.

ANN (O.S)
Jack.

JACK slowly turns ... ANN is looking at the OLD 2-SEAT AVRO SEAPLANE, beached on the muddy bank. It is a TOTAL WRECK - broken wings, rudder hanging by one hinge, control wires snapped and tangled.

ANN (CONT'D)
(hopeful)
You can fly ...

JACK
Are you kidding?! That heap of junk will never leave the ground!

He turns and carries on walking ...

JACK (CONT'D)
Besides, I ain't flown since the war. I ain't ever flying again.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMATRAN COAST - MORNING

The "VENTURE" is a couple of miles off the Sumatran coast, and heading out to sea.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - MORNING

CAPTAIN ENGLEHORN - a dapper skipper in his late 40's - is steering the ship. DENHAM is pacing anxiously while KURT - the FIRST MATE - studies ANN'S PENCIL RUBBING. He is marking a course on a MODERN MAP.

KURT
Here!

DENHAM watches with excitement as KURT makes a CROSS in the middle of a vast empty ocean.

KURT (CONT'D)
It says the island is surrounded by salak-pur ... a fog bank.

DENHAM
How many days?

ENGLEHORN
(adamant)
I've sailed these waters for fifteen years. There's no island there.

DENHAM
(angry)
I'm chartering this vessel, Engelhorn - how many days?

ENGLEHORN
(sullen)
Two ... maybe three.

The SOUND of an approaching PLANE!!!

EXT. VENTURE DECK - MORNING

DENHAM and KURT come out onto the deck, scanning the sky for the plane ...

KURT
Mr Denham!

KURT is pointing at the SEA.

DENHAM
(confused)
What the -

CRASH CUT TO:

EXT. SUMATRAN COAST - MORNING

The OLD SEAPLANE is speeding along the SURFACE OF THE WATER! The engine is belching BLACK SMOKE, but is still propelling the wreck at a far clip. The floats show signs of HASTY REPAIR to keep them watertight.

CLOSE ON: JACK in the FRONT COCKPIT, with ANN behind him ... SEA SPRAY is showering them. JACK is keeping an eye on the GAUGES.

JACK
(yelling above noise)
I'm gonna pull along side. I can't cut the engine - she'll never start again.

EXT. VENTURE/OCEAN - MORNING

Most of the CREW are lining the DECKS, watching with AMUSEMENT as the SEAPLANE pulls up along side. ENGLEHORN has cut the engines.

DENHAM groans when he recognises ANN.

ANN
(yelling)
I'm coming onboard! Throw down a ladder!

DENHAM
(yelling)
You're outta your league here, Miss Darrow!

ANN
(yelling)
There's no hard feelings, Mr Denham! I just want to come to the island with you!

MR DENHAM
(yelling)
Does this look like the "Queen Mary"?? We don't take passengers! Full steam ahead, Captain Engelhorn!

DENHAM walks away.

JACK
(sarcastic)
Well, that was certainly worth the effort! Whaddya do for an encore?

DENHAM and ENGELHORN head toward the WHEELHOUSE ... BANG! BANG! ... GUNSHOTS! They race back to the side ...

BANG! BANG! ANN is PUMPING PISTOL BULLETS into the plane's FLOATS! It immediately starts SINKING!

ANN
(yelling)
Are you going to stand there and watch us drown, Gentlemen?

ENGELHORN (O.S)
(orders)
Throw down a ladder ... Quick now!

CLOSE ON ... DENHAM.

DENHAM
(muttering)
Shit!

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

WIDE SHOT ... The "VENTURE" steaming towards the horizon.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

ANN is quietly studying the MAP ... she is wearing a borrowed set of MEN'S CLOTHES.

FOOTSTEPS approach ...

DENHAM (O.S)
You're outta luck, Driscoll ... we're not going to Jakarta. We're going to find this island.

DENHAM and JACK enter the WHEELHOUSE. DENHAM is surprised to see ANN there ...

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(coolly)
Isn't that right, Miss Darrow?

DENHAM casually takes the MAP and ROLLS IT UP.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
After all ... we're a team. We have no conflict of interest here. This piece of dirt is gonna make us all famous. There's enough for everybody - right, Jack?

JACK
You're wasting your time. When do I get off this Goddamn boat?

DENHAM
A million dollars, Jack ... Does that sound like a waste of time? You make a film that thrills and excites the public - you're richer than God.

ANN
(wary)
Just what exactly are you expecting to find?

DENHAM
(mysterious)
Come, Miss Darrow ... both you and I know there's more on that island than a bunch of old ruins.

ANN
(quietly)
The Cult of the Beast God.

JACK SCOFFS.

DENHAM
What greater spectacle than a primitive race coming face to face with the civilised world!

JACK LAUGHS ... DENHAM pours himself a drink.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
Go ahead and laugh, Driscoll. Miss Darrow and I are sailing into history.

JACK looks at ANN.

JACK
You're not taking this guy seriously?

ANN
I don't know what we'll find ...
(pointedly)
... but I do know Mr Denham has no right to claim this discovery as his own.

JACK
Your father's dead. What are you trying to prove? That you're as good as your old man?

ANN
(incredulous)
I beg your pardon?

JACK
You've got his taste in clothes.

ANN looks at JACK with CONTEMPT. DENHAM glances from one to the other - a BEMUSED SMIRK crosses his face, as he raises his glass in a toast.

DENHAM
(sarcastic)
Happy days!

CUT TO:

INT. ANN'S CABIN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: LORD DARROW'S WATCH ... 9.35 ... slow ticking of the second hand.

ANN is lying on her bed, looking at her father's WATCH. She has been CRYING.

The SOUND of a MOURNFUL VIOLIN wafts into the cabin ... playing "Brahms' Lullaby".

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

ANN emerges from her cabin ... KURT is at the stern of the ship, hunched on a box, PLAYING A VIOLIN. It is a HEAVY SEA and SPRAY mists over ANN, as she walks towards the rail.

ANN quietly withdraws her father's SILVER FOB-WATCH from her jacket ... she slowly holds it over the side of the ship ... SEA SPRAY showers against her face as she releases it into the churning sea.

SUDDEN VOMIT SOUNDS ... ANN JUMPS WITH FRIGHT as a LIFEBOAT COVER suddenly lifts up and JACK leans out, THROWING UP into the sea! He glances at ANN with BLEARY EYES.

JACK
Haven't found my sea-legs yet. I'm not a good sailor ... but's who's complaining? I'm on a wonderful cruise with first class accommodation ... and a beautiful babe has just walked into my bedroom.

JACK rolls back in the LIFEBOAT ...

JACK (CONT'D)
Yeah! Life's looking pretty damn good at the moment ...

JACK looks her up and down ...

JACK (CONT'D)
... and so are you.

JACK suddenly SITS UP WITH A START!

JACK (CONT'D)
(alarmed)
Jesus Christ!

A LARGE LUMP is moving under JACK'S CLOTHES ... he SLAPS and THUMPS at it in a PANIC.

A large SHIP RAT suddenly pops out of his collar and scampers away.

ANN looks at JACK with AMUSEMENT, as he struggles to regain his composure!

ANN
Keeping good company I see.

ANN turns away, hiding her GIGGLES ... she heads back towards her cabin.

JACK
(yelling indignantly)
Yeah well, enjoy the joke, cos when this boat reaches Jakarta, I'll be first off. You'll never see me again ... and believe me - that day cannot come soon enough.

JACK momentarily disappears into the LIFEBOAT ...quickly POPPING UP again!

JACK (CONT'D)
(yelling angrily)
I've got no problem with you ignoring me for the rest of the voyage!

JACK rolls back into the lifeboat, pulling the cover across ... as the SOUND of LOUD LAUGHTER carries from ANN'S CABIN.

EXT. FOREDECK - DAY

HERB is CLEANING 2 CAMERAS in the sunshine - they lie on a blanket IN PIECES. His SHOULDER is still BANDAGED.

ANN is relaxing beside him. HERB lifts the CAMERA BODY and WINCES.

ANN
How's your shoulder?

HERB
Shoulder's fine ... It's this -

HERB pulls up his sleeve - ANN flinches at the sight of an UGLY SCAR on his arm.

HERB (CONT'D)
(matter-of-fact)
Sea Lion up in Nova Scotia. The sinew never really mended. Mr Denham won an award for that picture. Personally I'm more proud of some wonderful footage we shot in the Rockies ... a pair of Grizzlies - er, you know ... mating. Excuse my language!

HERB pulls up his TROUSER LEG, revealing AN ARTIFICAL LIMB!

HERB (CONT'D)
Cost me my leg - but as Mr Denham says ... "Pain is temporary, Film is forever"

ANN looks appalled.

SUDDEN CLATTER OF FEET as KURT emerges from a hold, heading for the WHEELHOUSE.

KURT
(excited)
We've arrived!

ANN leaps to her feet.

CUT TO:

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

A SWEEPING PAN of the HORIZON ...

... NOTHING BUT EMPTY SEA.

DENHAM, ENGLEHORN, KURT and ANN are standing in the WHEELHOUSE, looking in ALL DIRECTIONS.

ENGLEHORN
(smug)
I guess that answers your questions. There's no island on these co-ordinates.

DENHAM
(angry)
What are you saying? It doesn't exist?

ENGLEHORN sweeps his arm across the horizon.

ENGLEHORN
No island - not even a lousy fogbank.

DENHAM throws the MAP on the floor in a fit of anger.

ANN
It has to be here! You can't just abandon the search.

DENHAM
Miss Darrow, this expedition is costing me two grand a day ... if you have any suggestions, I wanna hear them.

ANN looks around HELPLESSLY ...

CLOSE ON: THE MAP ... a gust of wind blows it towards the door. JACK'S FOOT pins it down.

ENGLEHORN
I'm turning this ship around and charting a course for Jakarta!

JACK (O.S)
What's your hurry?

JACK is standing quietly in the doorway ... ENGLEHORN looks at him warily.

JACK (CONT'D)
I know a bit about navigation ...

JACK glances down at the MAP beneath his foot.

JACK (CONT'D)
... and from where I'm standing, I'd guess we're half a degree out. That puts the island a couple of hundred miles north-west.

ENGLEHORN
(flustered)
Are you questioning my navigational skills?

JACK shrugs ...

JACK
Sure ... ok ...

DENHAM
What's he talking about, Englehorn?

DENHAM stares at ENGLEHORN ... ENGLEHORN avoids his gaze.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(darkly)
Steer a course north-west ... Skipper.

EXT. DECK - DAY

JACK is walking away from the bridge ... ANN runs after him.

ANN
Jack!

JACK pauses ... he turns.

ANN (CONT'D)
(awkwardly)
Thank you.

JACK
(shrugs)
It's ok ... What's a few more days on this rusty hulk?

ANN
Yeah, well ... I owe you one.

JACK'S face LIGHTS UP.

JACK
I guess you do ... Care to join me for a drink?

CUT TO:

INT. LIFEBOAT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: MUGS click together ... JACK and ANN are huddled in the LIFEBOAT, TOASTING each other with whiskey filled ship's mugs.

JACK
Bottoms up!

ANN
Cheers Flight Lieutenant!

JACK is taken aback ... he sees his old LEATHER FLYING COAT is lying open, revealing a faded "Flight Lieutenant Driscoll" label in the collar.

ANN
What's the matter?

JACK pulls the COAT away.

JACK
I don't like people snooping.

ANN
I wasn't snooping.

JACK
Ok, ok ... let's change the subject.
(patting the seat)
Why don't you sit next to me. Much cozier.

ANN
(ignoring him)
Is it true?

JACK raises his eyebrows ...

ANN (CONT'D)
That you won the Congressional medal of Honor?

JACK
(warily)
Where did you hear that?

ANN
The locals say you were a regular war hero.

JACK
I shot down a few planes, if that's what you mean.

ANN
(flippant)
... And killed a few people.

JACK looks away.

ANN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry ... I don't know why I said that. Stupid ... stupid!

JACK
(shrugs)
I've seen men die.

JACK stares silently at the bottom of the boat.

ANN gently reaches across the TAKES HIS HAND ... He PULLS IT AWAY.

JACK
Hey ... hey! Do you think I'm gonna cry or something? Jesus Christ! You're not gonna get tears out of me!

ANN slowly takes his FLYING COAT and sits next to him, wrapping the COAT around their shoulders.

ANN
(softly)
I'm cold, Jack.

She snuggles against JACK ... he puts his arm around her.

AT THAT MOMENT: The SHIP'S ENGINES SUDDENLY STOP.

JACK and ANN both peer above the edge of the lifeboat ... PUSH IN on their AWESTRUCK FACES ...

EXT. VENTURE - NIGHT

WIDE SHOT: The "VENTURE" sits on a FLAT SEA, DWARFED by nearly vertical TOWERING WALL OF FOG ... It rises hundreds of feet into the air, lit by an EERIE MOONLIGHT.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: ENGLEHORN knocks back a GLASS OF SCOTCH. He sits alone in the WHEELHOUSE ... the ship has stopped, the wheel abandoned.

ANN and JACK race into the WHEELHOUSE, followed by DENHAM.

ENGLEHORN
I can take you no further, Denham.

ENGLEHORN is trembling with fear. KURT arrives in the WHEELHOUSE.

DENHAM
Kurt! Take her into the fog. Nice and slowly.

KURT pushes the lever to "Slow Ahead" and MANS THE WHEEL as the "VENTURE" starts to crawl towards the fog.

ENGLEHORN downs ANOTHER SCOTCH.

ENGLEHORN
Seven years ago I picked up a castaway - the skipper of a Norwegian barque.

The GROUP listen to ENGLEHORN in SILENCE.

ENGLEHORN (CONT'D)
I have never seen a man so mentally ravaged. He had gone blind, not through any injury - but because his mind could no longer deal with the terrible sights he had witnessed. I sat with him during his last night on earth, listening to his fevered whisperings. He spoke of sailing into a thick fog and of running aground on an uncharted island. He spoke of a huge wall, built by a long forgotten civilisation and of a creature - neither man nor beast - that lived behind that wall. Of the thirty crewmen who made it ashore, he was the only one who looked into the eyes of the Beast and survived.

ANN instinctively grasps JACK'S HAND.

ENGLEHORN (CONT'D)
If we sail into that fog, it will be the death of us all.

LOW ANGLE: DENHAM - the WINDOWS of the bridge behind him.

DENHAM
I'm not a man who easily succumbs to fear, Captain Englehorn.

As DENHAM talks, the FOG swirls over the WINDOWS, encapsulating the "VENTURE" in a MILKY SHROUD.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOG BANK - NIGHT

The "VENTURE" glides silently through the fog.

EXT. VENTURE DECKS - NIGHT

MONTAGE ... TENSE FACES: ANN ... JACK ... DENHAM ... ENGLEHORN. Nobody talks, just stares ahead into the gloom ... CREW line the front of the boat, looking for rocks ... The PROPELLERS push the ship forward ... The PROW cuts through the water.

ANN stands alone ... peering into the MIST, now lit with a SICKLY YELLOW GLOW.

DENHAM emerges from out of the GLOOM ... he slides up BESIDE HER.

ANN
Sun's coming up ...
(checks watch)
We've been in the fog for six hours.

ANN reacts with surprise as DENHAM glides his finger across her cheek!

DENHAM
(whispers)
You have tiny drops of water clinging to your skin.

He starts to NUZZLE HER NECK! ANN PUSHES HIM AWAY!

ANN
Get off me!

DENHAM bares his teeth in an UGLY GRIN ...

AT THAT MOMENT ... the SHIP SHUDDERS!

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAWN

The "VENTURE'S" HULL scrapes against a CORAL OUTCROP.

EXT. VENTURE DECKS - DAWN

A SAILOR calls from the prow ...

SAILOR
(yelling)
Eight fathoms!

KURT is manning the wheel.

KURT
Hold her steady ...

The FOG is suddenly THINNING ... within seconds the spectacular sight of SKULL ISLAND materializes in front of them! ... About 7 miles long by 1 mile wide, STEEP CLIFFS rising from the sea, DENSE JUNGLE growth across it's interior. The island has several JAGGED RIDGES, dominated by a tall, sheer MOUNTAIN at the far end.

ANN is standing next to JACK ... she is looking through BINOCULARS.

ANN
(excited)
I can see the wall!

JACK takes the BINOCULARS ...

BINOCULAR POV: At the closest end, the island forms a NARROW PENINSULA ... jutting above the canopy of TREES, JACK can make out the top of a HUGE STONE WALL, seemingly cutting the peninsula off from the rest of the island. OTHER RUINS are visible ... At the foot of the peninsula is a SANDY BEACH, the only visible LANDING SITE.

DENHAM has been conspicuously SILENT ... he is leaning against the rail, ENTRANCED by the island.

CLOSE ON: DENHAM.

DENHAM
(quietly)
We've hit paydirt ...

CUT TO:

EXT. VENTURE DECK - MORNING

The atmosphere on deck is buzzing with EXCITED EXPECTATION as a BOAT is lowered into the water, ready for the short trip to SKULL ISLAND ... RIFLES, FOOD, WATER & CAMERA EQUIPMENT is loaded on board. DENHAM and 6 CREW - including ENGLEHORN and HERB - clamber down the ship's ladders into the BOAT.

JACK is lying in the sun, watching the activities with a degree of BEMUSEMENT. He clearly has no interest in getting involved.

ANN skips past ... she is clutching SKETCHBOOKS and NOTEPADS - VERY EXCITED, like a little girl at a picnic ....

ANN
Aren't you coming, Jack?

JACK shakes his head.

JACK
Bring me back a souvenir.

KURT helps ANN climb onto the ladder.

DENHAM (O.S)
(yelling)
Hey, Kurt!

DENHAM is looking up from the BOAT ... OARS are being fitted into ROWLOCKS.

DENHAM
(yelling)
Not her! There's no room for her!

ANN pauses in DISBELIEF - the BOAT is half empty.

ANN
Buggar that!

She starts climbing down. DENHAM pushes the BOAT away from the "VENTURE" with an oar.

DENHAM
(yelling)
It's a little far to swim, Miss Darrow!

ANN watches helplessly as the SAILORS start rowing towards the island.

ANN
(yelling)
You bastard!

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The BOAT rides a wave onto the beach. DENHAM jumps out, followed by the OTHERS - RIFLES at the ready ... HERB staggers up the beach with the CAMERA & TRIPOD on his shoulder.

As they warily advance up the narrow SANDY BEACH towards the jungle, STONE STRUCTURES become visible, half buried in VINE STREWN FOLIAGE.

The GROUP advance into the JUNGLE ... a GLOOMY, CREEPY place. DENHAM is elated.

DENHAM
(whispers)
Get a shot of these ruins, Herb.

HERB sets up. The style of stonework is clearly from the SAME CULTURE as the SUMATRAN TEMPLE.

HERB'S CAMERA POV: Panning across the RUINS ...

AT THAT MOMENT ... a BIG FRIGHT as a NATIVE POPS UP into HERB'S SHOT, swinging a WEAPON towards CAMERA.

PUSH INTO: DENHAM reacting with ALARM and SHOCK ...

CLOSE ON: HERB'S CAMERA falls towards the ground ...

HERB'S CAMERA POV ... Weird ANGLE as CAMERA hits ground - RUSHING NATIVE FEET trample past LENS towards a TERRIFIED DENHAM and SAILORS ... FOOT KICKS CAMERA ...

CRASH TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. VENTURE - DAY

JACK is lying in the sun ... He watches KURT pacing ANXIOUSLY. He pauses to peer through BINOCULARS.

KURT
(nervous)
They should be back by now ... they're late ... way too late!

AT THAT MOMENT ... A LOUD INCESSANT DRUM BEAT pounds across the water from the island. KURT FREEZES!

KURT (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

CUT TO:

INT. ANN'S CABIN - DAY

JACK bursts into ANN'S CABIN ... she is lying on her bed. JACK throws her a RIFLE.

JACK
We need every man we can get!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKULL ISLAND COAST - DAY

KURT, O'BRIEN, COOPER, 3 SAILORS, JACK and ANN row silently towards SKULL ISLAND ... towards the SOUND OF the INCESSANT DRUMBEAT. Everyone is armed with a RIFLE.

They pass through jagged rocks ... past the WRECK of a wooden coastal schooner - possibly the NORWEGIAN BARQUE, ENGLEHORN referred to. The SKELETAL SHIP is a creepy sight - particularly the row of STRANGE BIRD-LIKE CREATURES perched along a rotten mainspar.

The BOAT rounds an OUTCROP of rocks, and lines up for the shore ... An EERIE PHENOMENON suddenly occurs - The distant MOUNTAIN, a mid range RIDGE LINE and foreground ROCKS all line up - providing an abstract, but distinct image of a HUMAN SKULL ... visible only from that one position.

ANN
(captivated)
Skull Island ...

ANN instinctively GRASPS JACK'S HAND. He squeezes it tightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKULL ISLAND BEACH - DAY

THE BOAT slides onto the sand next to DENHAM'S EMPTY BOAT ... Nobody talks. Using HAND SIGNALS, JACK quickly leads the GROUP up the beach and into the JUNGLE.

ANN stares wide-eyed, at the RUINS.

EXT. SKULL ISLAND JUNGLE - DAY

CLOSE ON: The FALLEN CAMERA ... JACK warily steps over it, scanning the JUNGLE, RIFLE poised. The FOLIAGE is TRAMPLED, but there is no sign of DENHAM'S PARTY.

The DRUM BEATS are close, coming from deeper inside the ISLAND, through seemingly IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE.

ANN
(loud whispers)
Jack!

ANN is standing by the ENTRANCE to a TUNNEL, set into a ROCKY CLIFF. The DRUM BEATS are ECHOING DOWN THE TUNNEL ... JACK signals KURT, O'BRIEN, COOPER & the 3 SAILORS to follow ...

INT. TUNNEL/CRYPT - DAY

The TUNNEL is man-made, and ORNATELY DECORATED. LIGHT FILTERS in through cracks in the roof.

The TUNNEL suddenly widens out to a large CHAMBER ... The GROUP collectively GASP at the sight of over a hundred MUMMIES lining the walls! They are all neatly arranged in alcoves and are dressed in some kind of CEREMONIAL clothing.

A HUGE STATUE of KONG stands sentry at the far end of the chamber - which clearly carries on through another archway. The place has the atmosphere of a CATHEDRAL.

A CREEPY TRANCE-LIKE MOANING now joins the DRUMS, the SOUND is very close.

INT. SKULL CHAMBER - DAY

JACK leads the GROUP into a large chamber, about the size of a squash court. DAYLIGHT FLOODS IN through openings carved in the representation of the EYES, NOSE and MOUTH of a SKULL ... The MOUTH being the doorway which leads straight into the heart of the NATIVE CITY ... The RITUALISTIC SOUNDS are very LOUD.

The GROUP hurry across the chamber and peer out of the doorway, careful to remain concealed ... They stare in WONDERMENT at the sight ahead ...

EXT. NATIVE CITY - DAY

SPECTACULAR RUINS surround an open square ... It is FILLED with 200 NATIVES - in the midst of a WEIRD RITUALISTIC CEREMONY ...

The SKULL ISLAND NATIVES are similar to Solomon Islanders: Their skin is very dark, their features broad - but that is where the Melonesian likeness ends ... Like the architecture, their dress, headwear and weapons suggest an INCA or EGYPTIAN level of culture, but with a fierceness, or even violence suggested in their design. These people are SCARY ...

A YOUNG WOMAN sits bedecked in flowers atop AN ALTAR in the center of the square ...

... DWARFING ALL ELSE is the WALL. It rises directly from the square, towering 5 stories into the air. A STONE structure, with ORNATE CARVINGS and decorated with HUGE TUSK-like BONES and BRONZE KONG figures. In the center of the wall is an ENORMOUS 40 foot WOODEN GATE, strongly built and very old. From the vines and weeds that grow from cracks, it has clearly not been used for many years. The wall is not vertical on this side - it slopes like the pyramids, allowing quick access to the top.

JACK frowns ... DENHAM, ENGLEHORN, HERB and the 4 SAILORS are held CAPTIVE! They are in a state of DRUG-INDUCED DELIRIUM ... a WITCHDOCTOR is forcing a MILKY FLUID into their mouths from a GOURD.

The NATIVES suddenly drop to their knees, all facing the YOUNG WOMAN who remains STRANGELY SERENE. They start CHANTING softly ... "KONG ... KONG ... KONG"

ANN
(whispering)
She looks like a bride ... Is it a wedding?

KURT
(whispers)
It's a sacifical ceremony. They're gonna kill the girl!

ANN looks at him ... HORRIFIED.

JACK
(sudden urgency)
She's not the only one!

YOUNG NATIVE MEN armed with SPIKED CLUBS are quickly closing in on the CAPTIVES.

JACK swings his RIFLE to his shoulder ... TOO LATE! SAILOR 1 is clubbed to the ground! JACK targets ANOTHER NATIVE about to kill ENGLEHORN ...

BANG!!! The NATIVE is shot off his feet! ... The CEREMONY SUDDENLY GOES QUIET! Without the incessant noise, we can clearly hear DENHAM MOANING in DELIRIUM.

JACK steps out into the SQUARE, SWINGING the RIFLE from SIDE TO SIDE ... KURT, O'BRIEN, COOPER, ANN & the 3 SAILORS follow. The LOUD GUNSHOT has stunned the NATIVES, but JACK knows they haven't got much time.

JACK
(urgent)
Grab them ... we're heading back to the ship. Hurry!

The SAILORS move aside, towards the CAPTIVES ... revealing ANN.

The NATIVES GASP! They stare at her ... She looks around nervously, GOLDEN HAIR swirling in the SUNLIGHT. The NATIVES resume their chant "KONG ... KONG ... KONG" - except this time it's DIRECTED AT ANN!

KURT
It's Ann ... they want Ann!

JACK slips a PROTECTIVE ARM around her waist.

A NATIVE starts rising ... JACK fires into the air, and they back away ENMASS. ANN puts her hands on her ears as 100 NATIVES suddenly emit a strange PIERCING SCREECH like a pack of frightened monkeys.

JACK
(yelling)
Go ... Go!

KURT and the SAILORS quickly steer DENHAM, ENGLEHORN, HERB and 3 SAILORS back through the RUINED CITY towards the beach. They have to herd them like sheep ... DENHAM is staring at his fingers like someone who has never seen a hand before ... ENGLEHORN is GIGGLING at some private joke.

EXT. RUINED CITY/JUNGLE - DAY

The GROUP hurrying through the last of the RUINS ... nearing the BEACH. NATIVES are following them, stealthily slipping behind RUINS and UNDERGROWTH ... ALL EYES ON ANN. JACK is covering their retreat, occasionally shooting over the NATIVE'S HEADS if they get too close.

DENHAM suddenly SCREAMS ... his DISTORTED POV: THREATENING, GROTESQUE NATIVE FACES. He suddenly snatches KURT'S RIFLE, spins around and starts shooting straight at the NATIVES!

The NATIVES suddenly FRENZY at the sight of their comrades FALLING DEAD ... THEY CHARGE!

JACK
(yelling)
Run!

JACK grabs DENHAM by the collar and hauls him towards the beach ... A NATIVE SPEAR GRAZES JACK'S SHOULDER!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The GROUP races across the BEACH, pushing the DRUGGED CAPTIVES towards the BOATS.

SAILORS SHOOT into the CHARGING NATIVES, holding them a bay ... allowing EVERYONE to clamber into the BOATS.

They rapidly head out to sea, leaving the NATIVES SCREAMING on the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. VENTURE - DAY

DENHAM is lifted onto the deck ... he's gripping his temples against a FIERCE PAIN, but has regained some LUCIDITY.

DENHAM
(gasping)
Kurt! Get the men together ... we're heading back tonight to film the sacrifice.

KURT
You're in no fit state, Mr Denham.

DENHAM
Who's in charge here? Do as I say, Goddamn it!

SAILORS start to gather.

COOPER
Jimmy Dawson got killed.

O'BRIEN
We ain't going back!

DENHAM staggers to his feet.

DENHAM
(angry)
You'll do what I say! You men knew the risks when you signed on for this job!

O'BRIEN
Forget it, Mr Denham - we've made our decision.

ENGLEHORN
(hoarse yell)
Stoke the boilers!

ENGLEHORN staggers past DENHAM, giving him a COOL LOOK.

ENGLEHORN (CONT'D)
As soon as we've got some steam, we're outta here.

The SAILORS disperse to prepare the ship for sailing. DENHAM grabs KURT.

DENHAM
You piece of shit - you've turned them against me!

KURT
No, Mr Denham - You did that all by yourself.

WHACK! DENHAM PUNCHES KURT! WHACK! WHACK! He knocks KURT to the deck.

OTHER SAILORS leap onto DENHAM ... who lashes out with a frightening degree of violence.

JACK
(yelling)
Hey! Cut it out!

JACK pulls DENHAM away, slamming him against a wall - his arm under DENHAM'S chin.

JACK (CONT'D)
Get the message asshole ... we're leaving. I suggest you spend some time in your cabin.

DENHAM glares at JACK - a TRICKLE of BLOOD running from his nose. He suddenly shrugs JACK off and staggers away towards his cabin.

INT. ANN'S CABIN - EVENING

ANN is sitting in her cabin, writing up notes and making sketches ...

The SOUNDS of the "VENTURE" being prepared for sailing are heard.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR ... ANN looks up as JACK comes in, PEELING HIS SHIRT OFF!

ANN
What are you doing?

JACK
I'm cut ... here.

JACK points to the SPEAR WOUND on his shoulder ... he sits on HER BED.

ANN continues SKETCHING.

ANN
You've come to the wrong person. I'm not much of a nurse.

JACK
(grimaces)
It hurts.

ANN
(dryly)
It's not going to work, Jack ... I've seen naked men before.

JACK
(indignant)
Hey! I'm in real pain here!

ANN sighs ... gets up and INSPECTS THE WOUND.

ANN
(melodramatic)
Oh my God! It's bad!

ANN reaches for a SEWING KIT.

JACK
(uneasy)
Whaddaya doing?

ANN
You're in luck ... the skipper asked me to mend his shirt.

ANN produces a HUGE NEEDLE ... JACK looks ILL!

JACK
Oh no! I'm not good with needles!

ANN
Shut your eyes ... this is probably going to be quite painful!

BIG CU of NEEDLE POINT ... JACK'S EYES ROLL UP - he falls back on the bed ... FAINTING!

ANN
(alarmed)
Jack ... Jack?

She kneels over JACK, peering at him with CONCERN.

SUDDENLY! JACK grabs her shoulders and PULLS HER DOWN ONTO THE BED KISSING HER! She PUSHES HIM AWAY.

ANN
What the hell are you doing?

JACK
I'm sorry ... I was outta line -
(pain)
Ow!

ANN has grabbed him by the SHOULDERS ...

ANN
Shut up!

ANN KISSES HIM! In a frenzy of passion, JACK starts KISSING HER NECK and SHOULDERS. ANN shuts her eyes ...

ANN
(sighs)
I promised myself this wouldn't happen. I don't want to get tangled up with some man.

JACK continues kissing her ...

JACK
No one ever does ...

ANN
(softly)
I care about you Jack.

ANN gently pulls away ... JACK goes to KISS her again.

JACK
Do we have to talk about this now?

ANN
I just need to know where this is going.

JACK
Let me show you ...

JACK gently tries to push her down on the bed, but she resists.

ANN
I'm talking about love, Jack.

JACK
Oh ...

JACK pauses, looks at her ... she waits expectantly.

JACK (CONT'D)
Look ... I'm not sure where you're coming from, but...

JACK pauses for a moment, then reaches out for his shirt.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm no good at this emotional stuff... I kinda seize up. I don't put a lotta stock in commitment.

ANN slowly nods ...

JACK
(softly)
I didn't realise ... Hey! No hard feelings ...

JACK steps away from her ... He leaves the cabin.

ANN angrily KICKS HER SKETCHBOOK across the cabin.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The "VENTURE'S" PROPELLERS spin into life.

EXT. VENTURE DECK - NIGHT

CREW hurry about as the ship is about to sail. ENGLEHORN leans out of the WHEELHOUSE.

ENGLEHORN
(yelling)
Raise the anchor!

O'BRIEN (O.S)
Aye, aye, Captain!

The PENINSULA on SKULL ISLAND is AGLOW with an ORANGE LIGHT ... DRUMS and CHANTING can be heard ...

PULL back to reveal ANN, leaning against the stern rail - looking pensively at the ISLAND.

The "VENTURE'S" ENGINES start HUMMING, drowning out sounds from the NATIVES.

CREEPING POV: Someone is WATCHING ANN ... the POV moves stealthily down the deck towards her. ANN suddenly turns ... the POV retreats into the SHADOWS.

CLOSE ON: DENHAM quietly stepping back into the gloom ... his face emotionless.

ANN is getting spooked ... she turns away from the rail, nervously looking back at the ship - as if aware of somebody's presence.

SUDDENLY! TWO NATIVES RISE BEHIND ANN!!! They grab her, clamping a hand over her mouth!

DENHAM: His eyes glisten with ... excitement. He presses himself further into the shadows.

WIDER: SEVERAL NATIVES are silently creeping over the "VENTURE"! They lift ANN over the side ... she STRUGGLES helplessly as they PASS HER DOWN into a NATIVE DUG OUT.

WITHOUT A SOUND, THE NATIVES slip back into their CANOES and paddle away towards SKULL ISLAND!

The "VENTURE'S" ENGINES WIND UP and she starts MOVING AWAY towards the FOG BANK!

DENHAM hurries towards the STERN, suddenly throwing himself onto the deck, with a SCREAM!

DENHAM
(pained scream)
Help! Somebody! Quick! Agggh!

SAILORS emerge and run towards him.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(pained scream)
The bastards have taken Ann!

COOPER rushes to the side of the boat ...

COOPER
They've got her! I can see her!
They've got Ann!

JACK arrives in time to CATCH A GLIMPSE of the CANOES before they VANISH into the GLOOM.

DENHAM
(pained)
I tried to stop them ... there was too many!

JACK
(urgent)
Launch a boat! Quick!

O'BRIEN
No way - we ain't going back there!

JACK rushes past him and feverishly works at lowering a lifeboat.

JACK
I don't give a shit ... I'll go alone! Somebody get me a gun.

The SAILORS are gathering around sheepishly.

JACK
(yelling)
Get me a Goddamn gun!

KURT steps forward.

KURT
I'm with you, Driscoll.

OTHER SAILORS step forward ...

COOPER
Yeah, me too.

SAILOR 1
Count me in.

As the CREW rallies behind JACK, DENHAM quietly SMIRKS to himself ... he slides up to HERB.

DENHAM
(whispers)
Get the camera, Herb. Make sure you've got plenty of film stock.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGLEHORN'S CABIN - NIGHT

ENGLEHORN throws a heavy CABINET DOOR OPEN ... 10 brand new THOMPSON SUB-MACHINE GUNS are neatly lined up in racks. Complete with 70 round drum magazines, the TOMMY GUN is the Chicago gangster's weapon-of-choice.

JACK, DENHAM and a bunch of SAILORS are crowded in ENGLEHORN'S CABIN. DENHAM cradles a TOMMY GUN like a new-born baby.

DENHAM
You are a man of surprises, Captain Englehorn!

ENGLEHORN
(muttering)
Can't take chances with pirates in these waters.

Young JOSH hurries in.

JOSH
(excited)
What's going on?

DENHAM swings around to face the crew, clipping a DRUM into his TOMMY GUN.

DENHAM
Carl Denham Productions has just declared war on Skull Island!

CUT TO:

EXT. NATIVE CITY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: ANN ... She is being prepared for SACRIFICE! NATIVES are holding her arms ... A BRIDAL HEADRESS is placed on her head, COVERING HER HAIR. She is in the middle of the CROWDED SQUARE, lit by FLAMING TORCHES.

She closes her eyes ... STRANGELY SUBDUED.

The WITCHDOCTOR DANCES in front of her, FLICKING OILS from a small pot over her body.

ANN SUDDENLY LASHES OUT! She kicks the WITCHDOCTOR in the NUTS, simultaneously PULLING HER HANDS FREE and RUNNING through the crowd towards the beach!

She only gets 5 paces ...

ANN is TACKLED and ROUGHLY HOISTED ONTO the ALTAR. HER HANDS are tied securely to 2 ornately carved pillars. TEARS flood into her eyes.

"KONG ... KONG ... KONG" THE CHANT begins.

NATIVES start TURNING a HUGE WHEEL and the ALTAR STARTS TO CLIMB the slope towards the TOP OF THE WALL, moving on tracks like a primitive cable car.

CLOSE ON: NATIVE FACES, screaming and chanting, building up to a FRENZY. They climb the WALL behind ANN, carrying FLAMING TORCHES.

NATIVE SOUNDS FADE AWAY ... BEAUTIFUL, SAD MUSIC drifts in, giving the sequence an ETHEREAL ATMOSPHERE.

EXT. WALL/JUNGLE - NIGHT

ANN is weeping as the ALTAR reaches the top of the wall. For the first time, we get a glimpse of the OTHER SIDE ...

The WALL falls away vertically into a ROCKY GROTTO that leads into the DENSE TANGLED JUNGLE of SKULL ISLAND.

The ALTAR stops ON TOP OF THE WALL. Over 100 natives arrive just behind ANN, and spread out along the parapet. 2 NATIVES in CEREMONIAL COSTUME kneel beside the ALTAR, quickly and expertly adjusting BOLTS AND LEVERS. They signal back down to the SQUARE ...

ANN gasps as the ALTAR suddenly lurches out OVER THE EDGE OF THE WALL! It is being slowly SWUNG OUT over the GROTTO by a pair of cantilevered arms, hinged at the base of the wall.

CLOSE ON: NATIVE torches LIGHT POOLS OF OIL contained in cavities at the top of the wall. SMALL DAMS are released, allowing the FLAMING OIL to flow down CHUTES and CHANNELS, cleverly cut into the cliffs on either side of the grotto.

The FLAMING OIL ignites LARGER POOLS in HUGE HOLLOWED OUT CHAMBERS within the cliffs - carved into the shape of SKULLS. The SKULLS burst into GLOWING LIFE - just like 40 foot high HALLOWEEN PUMPKINS!

WIDE SHOT: ANN looks TINY atop the ALTAR which has almost reached the ground ... The ENORMOUS GLOWING SKULLS illuminating her ... The WALL TOWERING UP BEHIND HER. NATIVES line the top of the wall, holding FIERY TORCHES. The ALTAR settles into neatly CARVED RECESSES.

The HUGE GONG STARTS TOLLING ...

ANN is facing the INKY BLACK JUNGLE ... She is PANTING hard, trying to face her death with as much composure as she can muster.

A LOUD SPLINTERING SOUND comes from within the JUNGLE - something VERY BIG is moving towards the GROTTO!

NATIVES CHANT: "KONG ... KONG ... KONG"

ANN instinitively pulls at her bonds - to no avail. She can now see a DARK SHAPE approaching her. OILY SMOKE from the FIRES drifts across, OBSCURING HER VISION ... she can now only hear the FOOTSTEPS. It is a HUGE CREATURE, BREATHING HEAVILY ... It stops in front of her - SMOKE still blocking her vision ... She looks down - a GIANT LEATHERY FOOT is visible! She looks up into the murk ...

TEARS ROLL DOWN HER CHEEKS ...

The NATIVES suddenly go SILENT.

A SUDDEN PUFF OF WIND INSTANTLY CLEARS THE SMOKE ...

ANN'S EYES WIDEN ... Before her stands ...

KONG! ... a 25 foot SILVERBACK GORILLA. His fur is MATTED, ANCIENT SCARS mark his body - evidence of life and death struggles with unknown beasts. His face is AGED - SILVER HAIR predominant. He is resting on his KNUCKLES.

KONG rises on his hind legs and BEATS HIS CHEST ... ANN SCREAMS!!!

ALL the NATIVE'S launch into their piercing MONKEY SCREECH ... It WINDS KONG UP! He leans down, ROARING only inches from ANN'S FACE, then suddenly starts PACING FURIOUSLY from SIDE TO SIDE - like a caged animal. He ROARS at the NATIVES atop the WALL.

KONG suddenly CHARGES at the WOODEN GATE! He crashes against it, causing the ENTIRE WALL to SHUDDER violently ... A NATIVE loses his balance and topples off! He THUDS INTO THE GROUND at KONG'S FEET ... KONG quickly scoops him up and BITES HIS HEAD OFF in a PG 13 kinda way!

The NATIVES ROAR like spectators in a gladiator's arena ...

KONG charges aggressively at ANN ... The strength suddenly drains from her legs and she slumps between the pillars. KONG roughly snatches at ANN with his HUGE HAND and PULLS her free of the ALTAR.

THE NATIVES CHANT: "KONG ... KONG ... KONG"

SUDDENLY! BAM! BAM! BAM! NATIVES topple in a BURST OF GUNFIRE!

EXT. NATIVE CITY - NIGHT

JACK is leading the charge into the RUINED CITY! 20 SAILORS - armed with TOMMY GUNS and RIFLES - are blazing in all directions! The NATIVES flee in a MAD PANIC as JACK runs straight for the GATE.

He rushes up to a small OBSERVATION GRILL ...

JACK'S POV: KONG heading towards the JUNGLE, clutching ANN - she is SCREAMING and KICKING.

JACK
(yelling)
Ann!!!

KONG turns ... he and JACK make EYE CONTACT. KONG ROARS at JACK with DEFIANCE and disappears into the DARKNESS.

JACK turns back to the SAILORS ...

JACK
(urgent)
She's alive! Quick!

JACK backs away from the wall, and starts FIRING his TOMMY GUN at the BOLT securing the WOODEN GATE. OTHER SAILORS join in, SPLINTERING the TIMBERS in a HAIL OF LEAD.

All 20 SAILORS push the HUGE GATE and it slowly OPENS, exposing the JUNGLE beyond. DENHAM runs up, SWEATING AND PANTING.

DENHAM
Did you see her?

JACK
Yeah, I saw her ... she was carried into the jungle by ... an animal.

DENHAM
(worried)
What was it, Jack?

JACK HESITATES ...

JACK
An ape ... some kind of ape.

DENHAM sighs with relief ... He turns to the SAILORS.

DENHAM
(heroic)
Did you hear that, boys? We're looking for a monkey!

JACK
Englehorn - stay here with five men. Make sure this gate stays open. The rest of you, follow me!

ENGLEHORN BARKS out orders as the SAILORS organise themselves into pursuers and defenders. DENHAM signals HERB to join him with the CAMERA.

JACK grabs DENHAM'S ARM.

JACK
He ain't coming! We're not making a Goddamn movie here!

DENHAM
What's your problem, Jack? You get to save the girl and I get my third act!

DENHAM grabs HERB and pushes him past JACK ... JACK clearly decides to get on with the chase, rather than argue with DENHAM ... He strides through the GATES, signalling for the GROUP to follow ...

JACK
Single file - never lose sight of the man in front!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKULL ISLAND JUNGLE - NIGHT

Beyond the GREAT WALL, SKULL ISLAND is like no place you've ever seen before ...

The VOLCANIC ROCKS form a JAGGED, TORTURED LANDSCAPE of DEEP CREVASSES and TOWERING CLIFFS. The vegetation is THICK, the JUNGLE DARK. ANCIENT KNARLED TREES twist out of the ground, thick LICHEN and long MOSSES hang from branches and TANGLED VINES. STEAM RISES from festering SWAMPS ... DEEPER into the island, the steam is VOLCANIC - hissing out of FISSURES and BUBBLING MUD POOLS. The way light and contrast plays on the landscape is reminiscent of the etchings of 19th century artist Gustave Dore.

It is into this "Jurassic Park from Hell" that JACK leads DENHAM, HERB, KURT, O'BRIEN, COOPER, JOSH and TEN OTHER SAILORS. HERB is limping along with the heavy CAMERA & TRIPOD on his shoulder.

The ATMOSPHERE is TENSE ... Unseen CREATURES SCURRY in the darkness, fleeing from the approaching humans. The SAILORS are nervous, jumpy, SWEAT rolling down their brows.

DENHAM suddenly loses his footing and SPRAWLS ON THE GROUND ... his EYES WIDEN at the sight of the deep KONG FOOTPRINT he has just stepped in.

DENHAM
Holy shit! Look at the size of that!

JACK
That's your monkey, Denham.

DENHAM
(softly)
Kong ...

DENHAM'S EYES meet JACK'S - he is EXCITED. The SAILORS are worried ... everyone suddenly has their FINGERS ON THE TRIGGER, eyes nervously scanning the THICK JUNGLE.

A SUDDEN NOISE! Cracking BRANCHES ... heavy FOOTSTEPS ...

The SAILORS PANIC! The start FIRING in ALL DIRECTIONS, the flashes from TOMMY GUNS and RIFLES, blinding in the darkness.

JACK
(yelling)
Hey! stop! Cut it out!

SILENCE ... Smoke drifts away from the guns as the GROUP listens for SOUNDS ...

Like a pair of mighty trees being felled, Two DEAD prehistoric creatures - 30 foot tall LAMBEOSAURS - suddenly topple out of the gloomy foliage and THUD TO THE GROUND in front of the startled SAILORS!!

They warily approach the DEAD DINOSAURS ...

DENHAM
Hey! I thought these things were supposed to be extinct!

JACK
(dryly)
They are now.

JACK and the SAILORS look in awe at the bodies of the HUGE BEASTS. HERB starts ROLLING FILM as JACK pulls a LEAFY BRANCH out of a LAMBEOSAUR'S MOUTH.

JACK
They were just tasting the berries.

DENHAM
(grunts)
Yeah? ... Well, we gave 'em a taste of American lead ... and I don't see 'em coming back for seconds!

CUT TO:

EXT. NATURAL AMPHITHEATRE - NIGHT

KONG climbs down into a ROCKY HOLLOW - a vine-strewn natural AMPHITHEATRE. He DROPS ANN TO THE GROUND, and stands over her, poised on his knuckles.

ANN looks up at KONG ... She doesn't move ... He leans over her and ROARS! ANN suddenly scrambles to her feet and RUNS! Within seconds KONG has OVERTAKEN HER and blocked her path ... ANN turns and runs in the other direction. It is clear that KONG is playing CAT AND MOUSE.

ANN trips on something and falls over - A HUMAN RIBCAGE juts out of the MUDDY GROUND. ANN sobs as she SEES ALL AROUND: HUMAN BONES, some still encased in the remnants of BRIDAL DRESS and HEADWEAR ...

This place is KONG'S KILLING GROUND!

KONG scoops ANN up ... lifts her TOWARDS HIS MOUTH! She SCREAMS and struggles in his grip. His MOUTH OPENS and she KICKS and BEATS HIS FINGERS in a seemingly hopeless attempt to fight for her life.

Suddenly ... The NATIVE HEADDRESS FALLS OFF. Her LONG BLONDE HAIR cascades onto her shoulders.

KONG is STARTLED! He drops ANN ... she lies sprawled on the ground. KONG strides back and forth, SNARLING NERVOUSLY.

KONG tentatively reaches towards ANN'S HAIR with a HUGE FINGER, but PULLS HIS PAW AWAY at the last second ... SCARED BUT CAPTIVATED.

ANN sits ... MOTIONLESS and TERRIFIED.

KONG cautiously approaches ANN, LIFTING HER UP, holding her in his cupped hand ... He hesitantly STROKES THE BACK OF HER HEAD, like a child patting a kitten. KONG exposes HUGE TEETH and PINK GUMS in a NERVOUS GRIMACE.

ANN stays stocks still as KONG STROKES HER HAIR with increasing CONFIDENCE. He lets the GOLDEN LOCKS slip through his fingers.

SUDDENLY ... a SAVAGE HOWL echoes into the GROTTO from close by. KONG pulls ANN PROTECTIVELY to his chest, and DISAPPEARS into the DARK JUNGLE.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKULL ISLAND VISTA - DAWN

The SUN rises over the ROCKY CRAGS of SKULL MOUNTAIN.

EXT. PINNACLE VALLEY - MORNING

CLOSE ON: KONG'S FOOTPRINT ... in a SANDY dried-up stream bed. JACK looks up at the direction KONG has taken ...

The tracks head towards a SHEER CLIFF on the side of a NARROW, DRY VALLEY, an area deep in the heart of SKULL ISLAND, dominated by spectacular PINNACLES of STONE, jutting out of the ground like giant fingers. The VALLEY is less than 75 feet wide, flanked by sheer, seemingly unscalable cliffs.

JACK wipes the sweat from his brow, looking for a possible route up the cliff. Further down the valley, DENHAM and the SAILORS are grouped around the camera ...

CLOSE ON: An ANKYLOSAUR is being PELTED WITH STONES ...

HERB is filming, whilst DENHAM and the SAILORS try to coax some action out of the slow-witted, cow-sized DINOSAUR ... It staggers around in confusion.

DENHAM
(frustrated)
People'll think it's a Goddamn guy in a suit!

DENHAM suddenly gets an idea ...

DENHAM (CONT'D)
Hey! I gotta great idea! We could turn this place into a huge amusement park! Sorta like Coney Island with dinosaurs!
(excited)
It's a goldmine! I'll cut you boys in for twenty percent! We're gonna be rich!

The SAILORS voice their APPROVAL.

JACK (O.S)
(yelling)
Hey!

JACK is yelling from up the valley, waving for the group to join him.

JACK (CONT'D)
(yelling)
This way! Come on!

DENHAM frowns at JACK.

DENHAM
Let's keep this between ourselves ... assholes are not included!

The SAILORS LAUGH.

AT THAT MOMENT ... The GROUND TREMBLES!

The SAILORS look around - ALARMED. JACK almost loses his footing as the ground under him literally BOUNCES. He looks up the WINDING VALLEY ...

A DUST CLOUD suddenly spills out from around the next corner ... immediately followed by the BREATHTAKING SIGHT of a herd of TWELVE BRONTOSAURS, RUNNING in a WILD PANIC, down the narrow valley!! A PACK of 15 CARNOTAURS - 9 foot tall MEATEATERS - are PURSUING THEM.

Spectacular TRACKING SHOT: With the STAMPEDE ... A CARNOTAURUS leaps onto the back of a FLEEING BRONTOSAUR, causing it to falter and slide against the cliff. TWO MORE CARNOTAURS leap onto the ailing BRONTOSAUR as the rest of the pack stream past.

JACK turns and starts running! The STAMPEDING DINOSAURS are stretched across the valley behind him, less than fifty yards away and closing! JACK runs down the rocky slope towards DENHAM and the SAILORS - who seem to be frozen in fear!

JACK
(yelling)
Run!

EVERYONE TURNS and FLEES! GUNS and EQUIPMENT are abandoned ... HERB hoists the TRIPOD & CAMERA on his shoulder and limps after the others!

JACK is running as fast as he can ... he glances over his shoulder - the WALL of THUNDERING BRONTOSAUR LEGS are about to ENGULF HIM! JACK changes direction slightly, to make sure he is BETWEEN DINOSAURS ... They overtake JACK and he suddenly finds himself in a SEA of HUGE LEGS - like wildly pounding Redwood trees! The CARNOTAURS are snapping and snarling at the LEGS ... They see JACK! His only hope of survival is too stay WITHIN THE STAMPEDE, out of reach of the MEATEATERS!

DENHAM is running faster than the others! He is way ahead, still clutching his TOMMY GUN ... as the STAMPEDE engulfs the SAILORS.

QUICK IMAGES: 15 SAILORS in the SEA OF LEGS ... A SAILOR trips and is CRUSHED UNDER FOOT. A COUPLE OF SAILORS jump clear of the BRONTOSAURS - only to be set on by the CARNOTAURS. JACK ... HERB ... SAILORS, everyone is running madly, dodging BRONTOSAURS, CARNTAURS and trying not to trip!

A CARNOTAUR focuses on JACK ... It skillfully weaves IN BETWEEN and UNDER BRONTOSAURS and emerges right behind JACK, it's SNAPPING JAWS inches away from his head! JACK suddenly SIDE-STEPS, bringing the CARNOTAUR right along side ... he SHOULDER-BARGES it SIDEWAYS - under a BRONTOSAUR'S LEGS. The CARNOTAUR is instantly trampled!

DENHAM is managing to stay ahead of the stampede - possiblity RUNNING FASTER than any human before him! A CARNOTAUR races out in front of the stampede and bears down on DENHAM with incredible speed! DENHAM desperately waves the TOMMY GUN back towards the CARNOTAUR ... TOWARDS THE STAMPEDE!

JACK sees it coming ...

JACK
(yelling)
NO!!!

DENHAM FIRES, missing the CARNOTAUR ...

... but he hits the LEAD BRONTOSAUR in the chest. The BRONTOSAUR COLLAPSES AT FULL SPEED! It CARTWHEELS OVER, it's huge NECK and TAIL thrashing out. The OTHER BRONTOSAURS PLOUGH INTO IT, tripping and rolling!

JACK and the SAILORS suddenly find themselves in the middle of an amazing FLESHY FREIGHT TRAIN PILE-UP! SAILORS are crushed as BRONTOSAURS come down on top of them! A CARNOTAUR is squashed when TWO BRONTOSAURS slam together.

JACK throws himself onto the ground, rolling against a rock as MOUNTAINS of BRONTOSAUR TUMBLE all around him.

In the space of seconds, the MIGHTY HERD of BEHEMOTHS is reduced to a VAST PILE of DEAD or WOUNDED ANIMALS ... The CARNOTAURS immediately go to work, leaping onto BRONTOSAURS, ripping into fleshy stomachs.

Amazingly JACK, HERB and at least 9 SAILORS have survived ... however, they must now escape from the blood crazed MEATEATERS.

JACK crawls past huge HEAVING BELLYS and TWITCHING LEGS ... he looks around for some escape route ... He spots DENHAM - desperately scrambling up a steep rocky slope. It leads to a narrow fissure in the cliff - a possible way out.

JACK staggers out of the DINOSAUR PILE-UP ... he turns back at the SOUND OF LOUD HISSING - A CARNOTAURUS is climbing over a DEAD BRONTOSAUR, intent on JACK ... he can do nothing! The CARNOTAURUS leaps ...

BAM! BAM! BAM! The CARNOTAURUS is suddenly riddled with BULLETS and falls DEAD at JACK'S FEET!

KURT hurries towards JACK clutching his TOMMY GUN!

KURT
Go Jack! Quick!

JACK waves at SURVIVING SAILORS that are emerging from the PILE-UP.

JACK
(yelling)
This way!

SURVIVING SAILORS scramble past JACK and head up the steep slope. By some miracle, HERB limps out of the PILE-UP, covered in DUST - but still carrying the CAMERA & TRIPOD on his shoulders!

KURT blasts at a CARNOTAURUS - it TOPPLES BACKWARDS. He turns to JACK ...

KURT
Go Jack!

JACK heads up the slope. KURT backs away ... TWO CARNOTAURS suddenly charge at him. He fires the TOMMY GUN, shredding them with bullets, but cannot react fast enough when a THIRD ATTACKS from the other direction!

KURT SCREAMS BRIEFLY as he falls to the ground, under CLAWING FEET and SNAPPING JAWS.

The FOUR SURVIVING CARNOTAURS head up the slope!

JACK
Hurry!

JACK and the OTHERS are desperately scrambling up the STEEP SHALE SLOPE - LOOSE STONES that are impossible to get a grip on ... SAILORS start sliding backwards in their panic. The CARNOTAURS are sliding too, but their powerful legs are working furiously, propelling them closer and closer to the flailing SAILORS!

A SAILOR loses his footing completely ... he rolls past TWO CARNOTAURS before being grabbed by the JAWS of THE THIRD.

The SAILORS grab hold of WEEDS, ROCKS ... ANYTHING, to get away from the DINOSAURS. They move into a network of NARROW FISSURES between PINNACLES ... The CARNOTAURS can barely squeeze through.

ONE SAILOR is trying to escape up a sheer rock face ... he slips and falls back into the CARNOTAUR'S CLUTCHES.

The SAILORS REACH SAFETY ... a narrow fissure - too small for the CARNOTAURS - leads into STEAMY JUNGLE beyond the VALLEY. JACK looks back ...

HERB is struggling, a CARNOTAURUS snapping at his heels. JACK climbs back down the slope to help pull him up. The CARNOTAURUS lunges at HERB, grabbing his FOOT in it's JAWS! HERB screams and rolls over on his back, the camera on his chest. The CARNOTAUR is CRUSHING HIS ANKLE between it's TEETH!... Luckily it's HERB'S ARTIFICAL LEG!

Another CARNOTAUR is scrambling up behind the first ... JACK rushes forward, scooping up a LARGE BOULDER. He smashes it down on the CARNOTAUR'S head! It releases HERB'S FOOT and rolls away down the slope, collecting it's BUDDY on the way!

JACK and another COUPLE OF SAILORS grab HERB and the CAMERA GEAR and scramble to SAFETY through the FISSURE.

EXT. EDGE OF SWAMP - DAY

JACK, DENHAM, PEEK, HERB and the 7 surviving SAILORS are a bedraggled GROUP ... CUT, BRUISED, COVERED in DUST, SOAKED in SWEAT. Most of the GUNS are lost. They collapse into a NARROW CLEARING on the edge of a MISTY SWAMP-LIKE LAKE.

JACK rushes to the WATER'S EDGE, TRANSFIXED ...

KONG is visible across the wide swamp, maybe 150 yards away ... he is CARRYING ANN.

DENHAM
(awestruck)
Jesus Christ.

KONG disappears from sight. JACK is driven with urgency ... Cliffs rise out of the swamp on both sides of the beach - the only way forward is ACROSS. DEAD TREES jut out of the water ... some have fallen onto the shore.

JACK
Strap the trees together ... build rafts. Hurry! Denham!

The SAILORS set to work. DENHAM continues staring across the swamp.

DENHAM
(softly)
How are we gonna kill that thing?

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

A PACK OF UTAHRAPTORS are feasting on a DINOSAUR CARCASS, intent on stripping every last piece of flesh off the bones. A RAPTOR suddenly looks up, alarmed by a NOISE ...

WHACK! KONG'S FIST smashes down on his head, KNOCKING HIM OUT! The other RAPTORS turn to flee ...

WHACK! KONG'S FOOT stamps down on another RAPTOR ... He grabs another by the head, SNAPPING IT'S NECK with a quick flick. ANN is held to his chest, looking FRIGHTENED and EXHAUSTED.

The surviving RAPTORS scurry into the JUNGLE ... KONG sits down, and starts eating the DEAD RAPTORS like someone with a KFC craving!

As he snacks, KONG holds ANN UPSIDE DOWN and JIGGLES HER, watching fascinated as her HAIR swishes around in the SUNLIGHT. KONG leans back against a tree. He places ANN on his CHEST, prodding curiously at her ... ANN loses her balance, sliding onto the ground with a THUD! KONG clumsily scoops her back onto his chest.

KONG'S actions give us the sense of a toddler playing roughly with a favorite toy.

ANN slides off KONG'S chest again and falls 15 feet to the ground. He gropes for her ... this time, she scrambles under his arm and RACES INTO THE JUNGLE!

EXT. THICK JUNGLE - DAY

ANN runs hard, not daring to look back as the SOUNDS of KONG'S ANGRY ROAR echo behind her. She ducks BRANCHES and leaps LOGS, running into THICKER and THICKER jungle.

WOOD SPLINTERS and TREES CRASH as KONG pursues ANN, but clearly the DENSE JUNGLE is slowing him up.

ANN leaps down a STEEP BANK, sliding and rolling over FLAX bushes.

EXT. LUSH GROTTO - DAY

ANN tumbles into a LUSH GROTTO ... a SUDDEN HISS - A RAPTOR snarls at her! ANN races away from it, running across a CLEARING covered by SPECTACULAR TROPICAL FLOWERS. She stumbles, landing on a BED OF SPONGY VINES. ANN looks back fearfully, expecting the RAPTOR to strike ...

The RAPTOR is less than 6 feet behind ANN, but it has lost interest in her - instead it is desperately clawing at the ground, trying to scramble clear of the SPONGY VINES as they UNDULATE around it's feet!

ANN gasps as the VINES suddenly SEPARATE beneath her. She falls ...

INT. PLANT CHAMBER - DAY

... into a LARGE ORGANIC PLANT CHAMBER! A desperate grab onto a squirming VINE is the only thing that stops her falling further. She dangles 5 feet above a CESSPOOL of DIGESTIVE PLANT ACIDS - in what is obviously a hideous CARNIVOROUS PLANT ... some kind of cross between a Venus Fly Trap and a Pitcher Plant, but of a size designed to devour small dinosaurs!

With a HISSING SCREAM, the RAPTOR slides past ANN into the ACIDIC MORASS below ... ANN watches horrified as the RAPTOR thrashes wildly. BARBED Cactus-like SPINES emerge from the body of the plant, impaling the squirming RAPTOR as ACIDIC DIGESTIVE JUICES liquify it's body. OTHER DINOSAUR SKELETONS are visible in the churning CESSPOOL.

ANN clings onto the vine, however the plant is clearly aware of her presence ... ANEMONE-like TENDRILS claw at the air around ANN'S feet ... The VINE is lowering her slowly towards the deadly heart of the plant ...

WHITE VISCOUS FIBRES suddenly spit out of the sides of the PLANT CHAMBER, covering ANN in a COBWEB-LIKE FILM. Her breath becomes labored ... Her grip on the vine weakens ... ANN FALLS!

KONG'S mighty HAND catches her - inches above the ACIDIC CESSPOOL - and lifts her out of the PLANT CHAMBER!

EXT. LUSH GROTTO - DAY

ANN rises high into the air in KONG'S hand ... she gasps for air as the VISCOUS FIBRES still incase her body.

KONG wades through the KILLER PLANTS ... The BEAUTIFUL TROPICAL FLOWERS transform into SNAPPING CARNIVOROUS MOUTHS, attacking KONG ... he effortlessly rips them away as he reaches the safety of the JUNGLE.

ANN hangs MOTIONLESS in KONG'S hand ... He frantically pulls at the VISCOUS COBWEB, ripping it away. He shakes ANN - she is floppy like a RAG DOLL ... her eyes are open, but she doesn't respond as if PARALYZED.

INSERT: ANN'S distorted, fevered, POV of KONG.

KONG desperately LICKS at her face, attempting to clean away the last of the VISCOUS FIBRES. She lolls limply in his hand.

KONG - looking as close to PANIC as we will ever see - BOUNDS into the JUNGLE.

EXT. JUNGLE/LOG CHASM - DAY

ANN'S POV ... upside down shot WHIPPING through FOLIAGE with long LOPING STRIDES.

ANN swings from KONG'S HAND as he POWERS THROUGH the JUNGLE at HIGH SPEED. Her EYES GLAZING, SWEAT DRIPPING from her brow.

KONG races across a DEEP, NARROW CHASM - spanned by a HUGE FALLEN TREE, creating a LOG BRIDGE.

ANN'S POV ... becomes MORE FEVERED, as FOLIAGE BLURS PAST CAMERA.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

TWO MAKESHIFT RAFTS drift silently across the surface of the SWAMPY LAKE. HERB, JOSH and 4 SAILORS are in the first - they look TERRIFIED, JACK, DENHAM and 3 SAILORS in the second.

JACK is punting his raft along using a LONG BRANCH. The SWAMP is creepy ... DEAD TWISTED TREES stick out of the surface ... a thin film of FOG hangs in the air. SMALL FLYING LIZARD-type things flit about from tree to tree.

The first raft reaches the SHORE - a narrow SANDY BEACH leading into GLOOMY DENSE JUNGLE.

JACK and DENHAM'S RAFT is still 20 yards off shore.

DENHAM
(yelling)
Set up the camera, Herb! I want a shot of us reaching the shore!

JACK
Forget it, Denham ... the poor guy's half-dead.

JOSH is hugging his knees ... trembling.

JOSH
(scared)
I wanna go back to the ship.

DENHAM
Shut up, you chicken-shit! Roll camera!

DENHAM suddenly stands up, causing the unstable raft to ROCK in the water.

DENHAM
Give me the pole, Driscoll!

JACK puts the TIP OF THE POLE against DENHAM'S CHEST and PUSHES HIM DOWN.

JACK
(threatening)
Sit down and keep your mouth shut!

DENHAM has the look of a man close to BREAKDOWN ... he SPRINGS towards JACK, nearly tipping the raft over! DENHAM snatches the POLE as JACK tries to balance the RAFT.

DENHAM
(yelling)
I've had it with you giving orders, flyboy!

DENHAM swings the POLE at JACK, missing ... JACK and the SAILORS cling on as it ROCKS VIOLENTLY! DENHAM swings the pole, again and again, growing more FRANTIC. He starts HYPERVENTILATING ... JACK rolls away from each blow.

JACK sees a ROW OF BUBBLES moving rapidly towards the RAFT!

JACK
(alarmed)
Denham!

HIGH ANGLE: Looking down on the RAFT ... THREE HUGE SHAPES glide in the MURK below the surface of the SWAMP. They RISE beneath the RAFT ...

TIPPING IT OVER!

EXT. BENEATH WATER - DAY

The SWAMP is about 8 ft deep ... The JACK, DENHAM and the THREE SAILORS fall STRAIGHT TO THE BOTTOM as if weighted.

STRINGY 5 foot WEEDS rise from the bottom like tentacles. JACK looks around ... the WATER is DARK and MURKY. The SAILORS are trying to kick back up to the SURFACE, with no luck ... for some reason this water has zero buoyancy.

SUDDENLY a TERRIFYING CREATURE emerges from the gloom! It is some kind of PREHISTORIC AXOLOTL-type thing with WIDE TEETH. It is about 25 foot long - the size of a huge White Shark.

With a frightening grace, the AXOLOTL sweeps a SAILOR up in it's JAWS!

TWO MORE giant AXOLOTL'S glide out of the gloom! ANOTHER SAILOR tries to run, but is taken by the SECOND AXOLOTL.

The third AXOLOTL comes straight at JACK! He throws himself down, and the CREATURE glides over the top of him. JACK gets back on his feet - he does the only thing he can to escape - run for the shore along the swamp bed.

JACK pushes through the THICK FOREST of WEED, his cheeks bulging as he struggles to retain his air. Suddenly something GRABS HIS ANKLE!

JACK looks down at DENHAM ... he is desperately clinging onto JACK'S FOOT! An AXOLOTL suddenly sweeps by, causing JACK to duck. He grabs DENHAM'S arm and starts dragging him through the WEEDS.

EXT. SWAMP BEACH - DAY

JACK and DENHAM stagger onto the beach. SAILORS pull them clear of the water ... the other SAILOR survivor from the raft crawls onto the beach too. HERB has his tripod set up and is filming it all.

JACK is gasping for air ... DENHAM lies moaning.

SUDDENLY! An AXOLOTL ROCKETS OUT OF THE WATER! These things have legs and it scuttles towards the GROUP with incredible speed! Within seconds it has grabbed the SAILOR survivor in it's JAWS and disappears back into the swamp!

ANOTHER AXOLOTL charges out of the swamp! It comes straight at HERB, who has no choice but to abandon his CAMERA and quickly back away ... The AXOLOTL lunges at the CAMERA & TRIPOD, SWALLOWING IT with one gulp!

BAM! BAM! BAM! JOSH blasts the AXOLOTL with his TOMMY GUN. It slumps to the ground DEAD ... it's mouth hanging open.

There is a stoney silence as DENHAM lurches to his feet. He GLARES AT HERB ...

DENHAM
(yelling)
You lost my camera! You idiot!

TEARS well in HERB'S eyes ... the man is deeply hurt by this criticism.

HERB
I'll be pleased to cash in my life insurance, Mr Denham. Buy you a new one, sir.

DENHAM
(yelling)
I don't want a new camera! Herb ... I want you to crawl into the fish and recover my equipment!

HERB silently removes his jacket and cap ... he takes his glasses off and puts them in his pocket. He crawls into the mouth of the AXOLOTL ... DENHAM holds his feet and PUSHES HIM DOWN the CREATURE'S THROAT.

HERB
(muffled)
Just a bit further, Mr Denham ...

DENHAM
Have you got it?

DENHAM pushes him further in ... only his knees are sticking out of the AXOLOTL'S MOUTH ... The creature's TORSO BULGES GROTESQUELY as HERB suddenly PANICS!

HERB
(muffled panic)
It's still breathing! I can feel it breathing!

DENHAM
Have you got the camera?

HERB
(muffled terror)
Pull me out, sir! Pull me out!

AT THAT MOMENT ...

The AXOLOTL'S JAWS CLAMP SHUT! It was ONLY STUNNED!!!

A MUFFLED SCREAM emits from DEEP INSIDE the creature as it REARS UP.

DENHAM
Holy shit!!!

The AXOLOTL PULLS AWAY, and VANISHES INTO THE WATER!

DENHAM turns back to the SHOCKED GROUP ... he is holding HERB'S ARTIFICAL LEG. He thrusts the LEG at a SAILOR.

DENHAM
Make sure this gets back to his wife and kids.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - NIGHT

ANN'S FEVERED POV: A NIGHTMARISH MONTAGE of SURREAL KONG STATUES ... of LORD DARROW with a SKELETAL HEAD ... of SCREAMING NATIVES ... of FIERY CARVED FACES ... and finally of KONG'S EYES - looking at her with CONCERN.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAWN

CLOSE ON ... ANN. She opens her eyes, looking rested and calm - it is clear that her fever has passed.

WIDER ... ANN is lying in a BED OF SOFT GRASS. KONG sits beside her on his haunches - a PROTECTIVE GIANT, staring into the JUNGLE for any sign of danger.

ANN slowly sits up ... KONG realises she's awake! He reacts with behaviour that shows RELIEF and DELIGHT ... He thumps the ground and pulls his lips back in a silent scream ... rising quickly to his feet, KONG paces back and forth across the GLADE, patting his chest - all the time stealing quick glances at ANN, as if to reassure himself that she's watching.

ANN gets to her feet - but she is weak and suddenly doubles over with a hacking DRY COUGH.

KONG shows ALARM ... he hurriedly leans over a SMALL STREAM that bisects the pretty GLADE, and scoops up a HANDFUL of WATER. In a couple of paces he reaches ANN and clumsily DOUSES HER WITH WATER! KONG steps back nervously to survey the results - the REMAINING WATER cupped in his hand.

ANN looks up, peering through strands of wet, bedraggled HAIR. She points at KONG'S hand and GESTURES for him to come closer. He tentatively offers his OUT-STRETCHED HAND.

ANN DRINKS thirstily from his CUPPED HAND. She slumps back on GRASS BED.

KONG suddenly turns away and DISAPPEARS into the JUNGLE, leaving ANN sitting nervously alone ...

EXT. THICK JUNGLE - DAWN

LOW ANGLE ... Looking up at the TREES SMASHED by KONG as he pursued ANN.

JACK glances at the FOOTPRINTS in the mud and hurries back into the THICK JUNGLE.

EXT. JUNGLE CAMPSITE - DAWN

DENHAM, JOSH, O'BRIEN, COOPER and the 3 OTHER SURVIVING SAILORS are huddled around a CAMPFIRE, talking. It is clear that they have camped the night here.

JACK emerges into the clearing.

JACK
Let's go! I found tracks heading north.

DENHAM
Yeah? Well, we're heading south - back to the ship.

JACK
What?

DENHAM stands, faces JACK ...

DENHAM
Show's over. We've had enough.

JACK looks disbelievingly at the OTHER SAILORS, but NOBODY meets his eye ... JOSH prods the fire.

JACK
He's close. We could catch him in two, maybe three hours.

DENHAM
The girl's dead, Driscoll.

JACK
She's not dead - your movie's dead. That's the problem. You've lost your Goddamn camera ... you've lost your Goddamn nerve!

DENHAM
You stupid schmuck! You're in love with her!

JACK pauses for a moment ...

JACK
(softly)
Maybe I am.

DENHAM
Too late, Driscoll - she's found herself a real man!

A couple of SAILORS stiffle a LAUGH.

JACK
Fuck you, Denham. Who's with me?

The SAILORS remain silent ... JOSH glances at JACK.

JOSH
(uncomfortable)
I'm scared, Jack ... I don't wanna die.

JACK slowly nods.

JACK
(gently)
That's ok, Josh.

Without another word, JACK turns and heads back into the JUNGLE ... ALONE.

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - MORNING

ANN stands in the JUNGLE GLADE ... she glances nervously around as ANIMAL NOISES echo out of the JUNGLE from various directions.

A sudden LOUD SPLINTERING CRASH makes ANN spin around ... as KONG steps into the GLADE. He throws a BLOODY RIPPED LEG of some freshly killed DINOSAUR down at her feet! KONG sits back, looking very pleased with himself.

ANN looks aghast at the OFFERING as KONG eats the rest of the DINOSAUR with a certain amount of RELISH. She backs away from the MEAT ... KONG leans forward and pushes it closer to her. ANN steps away and SHAKES HER HEAD.

ANN
No ... thank you.

KONG SHAKES HIS HEAD as if mimicking her! He quickly retreats back into the JUNGLE ... ANN loses sight of KONG, but watches bemused as TREES SHAKE and CRASH while he hunts around for something.

KONG quickly emerges back into the clearing ... he holding a TINY OBJECT between his THUMB and FOREFINGER. With great DELICACY, he drops a RIPE MANGO at ANN'S FEET! ANN bites into it, suddenly realising how hungry she actually is.

ANN
(eating)
Good! More? More?

KONG acts COYLY at this praise ... he rushes out of the GLADE again ...

... returning in moments with the ENTIRE MANGO TREE, which he drops at ANN'S feet!

EXT. LOG CHASM - DAY

POV: KONG in the distance ... ANN is fleetingly visible through the THICK UNDERGROWTH.

JACK peers out from behind a bush ... KONG is about 150 feet away, on the other side of the NARROW CHASM, spanned by the LOG BRIDGE.

JACK hurries towards the LOG BRIDGE, carefully staying low and ducking from bush to bush.

The CHASM is deep, maybe 100 feet to the bottom - a DARK VINE ENTANGLED PIT. JACK carefully starts to cross the LOG BRIDGE ... it is covered in wet moss and quite slippery. He is totally vulnerable ... He watches KONG carefully, but the Gorilla is seemingly focussed on ANN.

JACK is over halfway across when KONG casually GLANCES IN HIS DIRECTION ... JACK throws himself forward on the log, trying to stay out of sight behind a bulky lichen covered STUMP.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE NEST - MORNING

DENHAM, JOSH, O'BRIEN, COOPER and the 2 OTHER SAILORS are warily moving through the JUNGLE, scanning the undergrowth. DENHAM clambers down a bank ...

DENHAM

Aw, shit!

DENHAM has stepped into a NEST of LARGE DINOSAUR EGGS ... he stands ANKLE DEEP in BROKEN SHELLS and EMBRYONIC FLUID.

DENHAM (CONT'D)

Goddamn it!

DENHAM angrily TRAMPLES the last UNBROKEN EGGS. O'BRIEN stands on the bank above the nest.

O'BRIEN

Must be some mighty big chickens around here!

AT THAT MOMENT ... O'BRIEN winces as A LARGE HORN emerges out of his CHEST! He is LIFTED into the air by a grief stricken COW TRICERATOPS!

AN ANGUISHED BELLOW! WHIP PAN: onto 3 more TRICERATOPS, including a LARGE BULL, ROARING in ANGER as they lumber towards the NEST!

The SAILORS react with horror as the TRICERATOPS CHARGE! ... They move with surprising speed ... HUGE HORNS lowered for the kill!

BAM! BAM! BAM! DENHAM fires, but the bullets RICOCHET off the TRICERATOP'S BONEY FRILL that surrounds it's head!

The GROUP turns and flees into the JUNGLE!

EXT. LOG CHASM - DAY

JACK reacts with ALARM at the SOUNDS of the SAILOR'S YELLS and BELLOWING TRICERATOPS ... they are heading in his direction! He steals a worried look back over the stump at KONG ...

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

DRAMATIC PUSH IN: As KONG reacts to the approaching CACOPHONY. He SNARLS ... and scoops ANN up, placing her HIGH in the BRANCHES OF A DEAD TREE, some 30 foot above the JUNGLE GLADE.

KONG bounds away towards the LOG CHASM!

EXT. LOG CHASM - DAY

JACK has no time to get off the LOG BRIDGE as KONG towers up over him!

KONG snarls at JACK, as if confronting his rival for ANN'S heart ... KONG suddenly leans across the BRIDGE, SWIPING at JACK!

JACK has to throw himself down as KONG'S HAND swots at him ... He rolls sideways to avoid another blow, this time clinging to vines to prevent a fall into the chasm!

AT THAT MOMENT ... DENHAM rushes out of the JUNGLE, followed by the SAILORS and 3 ANGRY TRICERATOPS! A SAILOR trips and is immediately ENGORGED by a TRICERATOP'S HORN!

DENHAM charges onto the LOG in a blind panic, followed by JOSH, COOPER and the last SAILOR ... The leading TRICERATOPS cannot stop in time and slides over the edge of the CHASM, legs desperately clawing at the air!

DENHAM almost collides with JACK on the middle of the LOG BRIDGE ... A SHADOW passes over them ... DENHAM screams as he realises KONG is standing on the other side of the CHASM!

KONG beats his chest, ROARING FIERCELY ... The MEN are trapped on the LOG BRIDGE between the 2 enraged TRICERATOPS on one side and the enraged KONG on the other!

KONG reaches down and LIFTS his end of the LOG BRIDGE. JACK, DENHAM and the 3 OTHERS cling on for dear life ... as KONG vigorously TWISTS and SHAKES the LOG, bucking the MEN into the air. DENHAM has his TOMMY GUN, but is too busy hanging onto the LOG to use it. JACK manages to grip onto the STUMP, but behind him SAILORS are FALLING OFF!

BOTTOM OF CHASM: SAILORS PLUMMET to the bottom ... ONE SAILOR crunches onto rocks, but COOPER and JOSH have their falls broken by a THICK NETWORK of VINES, and appear to land relatively UNHURT.

JACK and DENHAM cling on ... KONG ROARS with FRUSTRATION at JACK ... and HURLS the ENTIRE LOG into the CHASM!

DENHAM manages to LEAP ONTO VINES hanging from the far bank, but JACK RIDES THE LOG DOWN!

CRASH! The LOG SMASHES INTO THE ROCKS and JACK flies off it ... He bounces off vines and lands on the ground, STUNNED. The DEAD TRICERATOPS lies nearby.

COOPER is crawling along the ground with a SPRAINED ANKLE ... JOSH helps JACK to his feet. JACK suddenly pulls JOSH away from the TRICERATOPS' CARCASS ... The creature's STOMACH is BULGING and HEAVING GROTESQUELY!

JACK and JOSH flinch with horror as the TRICERATOPS' STOMACH RIPS OPEN and a HUGE 6 foot CARNIVOROUS MAGGOT-THING squirms out! It crawls hungrily towards JACK and JOSH!

SUDDENLY!!! A ROUND DIRT LID - larger than a manhole cover - POPS OPEN and a HUGE TRAPDOOR SPIDER DARTS OUT!! It grabs COOPER and drags him SCREAMING into it's LAIR, the LID neatly closing again!!

All around, MONSTROSITIES OF NATURE emerge from DANK BURROWS and crawl towards JACK and JOSH ... These are HUGE INSECTILE THINGS - combinations of SPIDERS, CRABS, MANTISES and CENTIPEDES!

JACK snatches up a LONG STICK and uses it like a SPEAR to fend these CREATURES off. He looks on helplessly as JOSH breaks away and runs towards the CHASM WALL.

JACK
Josh ... NO!

JOSH attempts to CLIMB THE WALL, but some BLIND TAPE WORM-THING reaches out of it's burrow and bites his leg. INSECT-THINGS descend on him !

A GROUP of SPIDERS with 7 foot LEG SPANS close in on JACK! Behind them hangs a LONG VINE, leading directly up to the top of the CHASM ... JACK charges at the SPIDERS, LEAPING as HIGH as he can. He lands on the BACK of the FIRST SPIDER, and using the bounce, he GRABS HOLD OF THE VINE, pulling himself away from the OTHER FRENZIED SPIDERS!

JACK is climbing HAND OVER HAND ...

SUDDENLY! He starts RISING FAST ...

KONG is perched on the EDGE of the CHASM, pulling the VINE up ... like a FISHERMAN reeling in a CATCH!!

JACK is HELPLESS!!

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

ANN looks around FEARFULLY from her PERCH - HIGH in the BRANCHES of the ROTTEN TREE ... she has heard the SCREAMS, but has seen nothing.

A HUGE SHAPE moves beneath her ... ANN freezes at the sight of an ALLOSAUR entering the clearing. This is a 25 foot tall MEATEATER - SKULL ISLAND'S most fearsome predator! The ALLOSAUR snatches a DEAD RAPTOR off the ground and crunches it in POWERFUL JAWS ... It pauses, as if SNIFFING. The ALLOSAURS head is only a FEW FEET below ANN ... she is too scared to breathe!

The ALLOSAUR suddenly looks up ... straight at ANN! He immediately CIRCLES THE TREE in big powerful strides ... ANN shifts her position to keep the ALLOSAUR in sight ... it is clearly getting very AGITATED!

With an almost delicate movement, the ALLOSAUR nudges the TRUNK with it's head ... the TREE lurches dramatically! ANN hangs on desperately ... The ALLOSAUR pushes HARDER, sending the tree TOPPLING TO THE GROUND!

ANN rolls away from the tree, jumps to her feet and RUNS!!

She races through the JUNGLE, dodging TREES, leaping over FALLEN LOGS, smashing through BUSHES ... The ALLOSAUR POUNDING AFTER HER! It's BREATH RASPING ... FOOTSTEPS THUMPING. The HUGE JAWS open - only INCHES FROM ANN'S HEAD!

SHE SCREAMS!

EXT. LOG CHASM - DAY

KONG has almost REELED JACK IN when he hears ANN'S SCREAM.

He immediately DROPS THE VINE, sending JACK PLUMMETING back down the CHASM! Fortunately the COILS of LOOSE VINE at the top of the chasm TANGLE, stopping JACK with a jerk about HALF WAY DOWN.

KONG RUSHES OFF towards the SOUNDS of ANN'S SCREAMS.

EXT. DENSE JUNGLE - DAY

ANN is stumbling ... the ALLOSAUR positions it's HEAD for the FINAL LUNGE - JAWS OPEN ...

From out of the DENSE JUNGLE - KONG CHARGES! He meets ANN and the ALLOSAUR HEAD-ON at FULL SPEED! KONG swings his fist, smashing into the ALLOSAUR'S HEAD ... ANN has to throw herself against a tree as the DINOSAUR SPRAWLS onto the ground beside her ... In a flash, KONG is ON TOP of the ALLOSAUR, POUNDING HIS FIST DOWN ...

The ALLOSAUR lies still ... ANN'S legs turn to jelly and she COLLAPSES. KONG is clearly startled ... he gently takes her in his hand ...

AT THAT MOMENT! The SECOND ALLOSAUR ATTACKS!!! He comes charging into shot, grabbing KONG'S ARM in his JAWS! KONG ROARS, ripping free just as the THIRD ALLOSAUR strides into the CLEARING! The FIRST ALLOSAUR scrambles back to it's feet! KONG holds ANN protectively as he braces himself for the FIGHT OF HIS LIFE. The THREE ALLOSAURS CIRCLE around him.

THEY ATTACK KONG and ANN! ... What follows is a BREATHTAKING FIGHT TO THE DEATH. KONG fights like a madman ... not only does he have to do battle with the ALLOSAURS, he is also PROTECTING ANN - constantly transferring her from ONE HAND to THE OTHER as the ALLOSAURS SNAP AT HER throughout.

KONG punches and smashes with his fists, but he also uses wrestling-style headlocks and flips ... for a brief moment, ANN rolls free on the ground and has to dodge 25 foot DINOSAURS and the GORILLA, as the frenzied fight THUNDERS all around her.

The FIRST ALLOSAUR is taken out when KONG PULLS a LARGE JAGGED TREE TRUNK out of the ground and RAMS IT into the ALLOSAUR'S MOUTH, PUSHING it out the BACK OF IT'S HEAD!

The SECOND ALLOSAUR he kills by grabbing it in a HEADLOCK, FLIPPING it over his shoulder, but REVERSING DIRECTION suddenly - BREAKING IT'S BACK with a sickening CRUNCH!

ANN is suddenly GRABBED by the LAST ALLOSAUR! She is taken in his JAWS ... It BITES DOWN - JUST as KONG GRABS HIS JAWS in BOTH HANDS. He rolls the ALLOSAUR onto it's back, ANN still wedged in it's MOUTH! KONG desperately uses all his strength to force the ALLOSAUR'S MOUTH OPEN ... ANN is RELEASED and rolls onto the ground.

KONG forces the JAWS OPEN until they RIP APART at the HINGE! The ALLOSAUR sprawls back DEAD.

KONG is PANTING HEAVILY ... he has been BITEN, RAKED and CUT. He puts his foot on the LAST ALLOSAUR and BEATS HIS CHEST TRIUMPHANTLY!

KONG hears ANN SOBBING ... he carefully picks her up and HURRIES deeper into the JUNGLE.

EXT. LOG CHASM - DAY

JACK pulls himself onto the TOP OF THE CHASM ... He rolls on the ground, EXHAUSTED.

DENHAM (O.S)
(loud whisper)
I'll see ya, Jack!

DENHAM is on the otherside of the CHASM ... looking VERY JUMPY.

JACK
Tell'em to keep the gate open for another twenty-four hours!

DENHAM nods ... he cradles his TOMMY GUN.

DENHAM
Good luck, buddy!

DENHAM vanishes into the JUNGLE.

JACK takes a deep breath and sets off - UNARMED - along KONG'S TRAIL.

EXT. VOLCANIC PLATEAU - DAY

KONG climbs out of the JUNGLE, SCALING a nearly SHEER CLIFF ... he uses ONE HAND to climb - the OTHER HOLDS ANN to his breast.

KONG climbs onto a vast PLATEAU - a VOLCANIC Mars-like landscape, dotted with deep BLOW-HOLES, bubbling MUD POOLS and fissures leaking STEAM with an ANGRY HISS.

KONG sits down and holds ANN in front of his face. He starts to pick TWIGS and LEAVES out of her hair and off her clothing ... a look of DEVOTION in his eyes.

ANN winces as he ROUGHLY pecks at her.

ANN
(gently)
Ok ... Ok ... That's enough.

KONG blinks at her ... he starts clumsily STROKING HER HAIR.

ANN
Ouch! That hurt!

ANN suddenly WRIGGLES in his hand ... he DROPS her to the ground.

ANN walks a few paces and sits on a rock ... KONG sits down beside her.

ANN scratches her head ... KONG scratches his head!

ANN
(bemused)
Stop copying me!

ANN puts her head in her hands ... KONG puts his head in his hands!

ANN can't help but LAUGH. She jumps to her feet ...

ANN
Ok! Try this!

ANN does a DOUBLE CARTWHEEL!

KONG looks at ANN BLANKLY for a moment ... then suddenly does a clumsy ROLL on HIS SHOULDERS! He sits up looking a little dizzy!

ANN laughs freely ... she CLAPS HER HANDS ... KONG CLAPS HIS HANDS and ROLLS OVER AGAIN!

ANN squeals with delight ... with GREAT DRAMATICS, she does a perfect ballet PIROUETTE.

KONG paces from SIDE TO SIDE like an over-excited kid ... He launches into a series of GROUND TREMBLING ROLLS. He sits up, dizzily looking for ANN ... SHE HAS VANISHED!

His playful excitment suddenly turns to PANIC as he looks around for her. He ROARS with ANGUISH, getting more and more AGITATED.

ANN
(calling)
Hey!

She leaps out from behind a rock. KONG BELLOWS and charges at her, SNATCHING HER UP. He ROARS into her face. ANN is GASPING and CHOKING - KONG is clearly holding her TOO TIGHTLY!

ANN face CLOUDS WITH COLOR and she looks TERRIFIED as KONG ROARS out the last of his fear. He CRUSHES her protectively into his CHEST.

ANN manages to push out a STRANGLED SCREAM ... This ALARMS KONG. He drops her on the ground. ANN slumps to her hands and knees GASPING and SOBBING.

KONG is CONFUSED ... he reaches for her.

ANN
(panicked)
Get away!

ANN shoves his fingers away ... she staggers to her feet, cradling her bruised ribs.

ANN
(scared)
Get away from me!

ANN hobbles away from him. KONG lopes around in front of her ... OFFERS HIS HAND. ANN hits out at it.

ANN
(shouting)
No!!! Leave me alone!

KONG cowers away submissively ... he looks confused and hurt.

ANN
Go away!!

ANN hurries away from KONG. He paces after her like a lost dog. ANN spins around ...

ANN
(savagely)
Go away!!!

KONG looks at her for a LONG MOMENT. HEAD BOWED, he turns and walks away ... leaving ANN completely alone on the VOLCANIC PLATEAU.

ANN walks a few paces, then breaks into a sudden RUN ... she runs across a CRACKED, BUBBLING landscape ...

HANDHELD CAMERA follows ANN as she scrambles down crumbling banks ... nearly falls into BOILING MUD when a CRUST OF ROCK cracks beneath her feet ... a PACK OF RAPTORS hiss at her from the other side of the STEAMING LAKE ... she stumbles into a GROVE OF TREES, disturbing a NESTING ELASTOMOSAUR.

As ANN'S helplessness increases, so does the frantic CAMERA as she staggers, cut, bruised and tear stained, through clouds of SULFUROUS GAS on this Hell-on-Earth.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL/RUINED CITY - NIGHT

ENGLEHORN puffs on his PIPE ... SAILORS armed with RIFLES and TOMMY GUNS are patrolling the WALL ... the area is effectively PROTECTED. There are NO NATIVES in sight ... Everyone is relaxed.

SENTRY SAILOR
(yelling)
Hey! Somebody's approaching!

SAILORS rush to pull the GREAT GATES open ...

DENHAM staggers in and COLLAPSES. He is even more dishevelled than when we saw him last. His clothing is TORN ... blood seeps from CUTS ... he's lost the GUN.

ENGLEHORN gives him a drink from a CANTEEN. DENHAM is GASPING heavily.

ENGLEHORN
Just take it easy ... Where are the others?

DENHAM
(panting)
They're dead.

ENGLEHORN
(shocked)
Oh my God ... Ann?

DENHAM pauses ...

DENHAM
(quietly)
She's dead ... Driscoll too. We've gotta get back to the ship!

ENGLEHORN nods.

ENGLEHORN
(yelling)
Prepare to break camp, men! We're heading back to the Venture!

There's a SENSE OF RELIEF amongst the CREW. TWO SAILORS lift DENHAM up and support him between them.

AT THAT MOMENT! A ZIPPING SOUND fills the air ... a VOLLEY of ARROWS, DARTS and SPEARS fly towards the SAILORS! Within SECONDS 3 SAILORS fall dead, including the TWO supporting DENHAM. He runs with incredible speed and throws himself behind a wall. ENGLEHORN and the 5 SURVIVING SAILORS take shelter, FIRING WILDLY in all directions.

DENHAM
(panicked)
Jesus Christ! Get me outta here!

ENGLEHORN
(grimly)
That's gonna be more difficult than you think ...

NUMEROUS HEAVILY ARMED NATIVES are fleetingly visible ... darting behind RUINS and TREES - cutting the SAILORS off from the beach.

EXT. VOLCANIC PLATEAU - DUSK

The DULL THUDDING of sporadic GUNFIRE can just be HEARD, high on the central VOLCANIC PLATEAU of SKULL ISLAND. The WALL and NATIVE RUINS are visible - some 3 miles away.

The SKY is a FIERY ORANGE as the SUN goes down ... SILHOUETTING the FIGURE of KONG as he sits impassively on a ROCKY BLUFF high above the JUNGLE.

KONG looks DOWNCAST ... he nonchalantly fingers a particularly NASTY looking WOUND - an Allosaur CLAW SLASH down the side of his ribs.

ANN (O.S)
(quietly)
Kong ...

KONG doesn't respond as ANN slowly steps up behind him. She looks a mud-stained mess, hugging herself against the cold.

ANN
I'm sorry.

KONG continues looking out to sea ... we sense the tremendous PRIDE and NOBILITY of this great beast. Very slowly, he turns his head and regards ANN with SAD EYES.

ANN
I'm sorry.

KONG'S BIG PAW unfurls and ANN gratefully climbs into it. He raises her against his chest ... ANN nestles into KONG'S FUR.

EXT. SKULL MOUNTAIN - DUSK

In VERTIGO INDUCING shots, KONG climbs HIGHER AND HIGHER - up into the HIGHEST PEAK of SKULL ISLAND ... carefully cradling ANN in his hand.

A sudden FLAP OF WINGS and FLICKERING SHADOW causes KONG to pull ANN close to his chest as a sinister BAT-TYPE CREATURE lunges at her ... These SCAVENGERS hover in the SKIES around SKULL MOUNTAIN... they have 8 foot wing spans and TALONED FEET. Their faces are more reptile then bat.

EXT. KONG'S LAIR - DUSK

WIDE: KONG steps out of a LARGE ROUND CAVE onto a LEDGE that juts out high over SKULL ISLAND ...

This is KONG'S LAIR ... in fact his CAVE is one of the "eyes" of the SKULL visible from the coast. Over the ledge is a DIZZYING DROP of at least 1000 feet down to the JUNGLE.

The "VENTURE" can be seen - moored off the TIP OF THE ISLAND, some 3 miles away.

KONG casually snatches a careless BAT-THING out of the sky and rips it's wings off ... He steps right to the edge of the LEDGE and BEATS HIS CHEST, ROARING to the whole island in a mighty show of power.

INT. KONG'S LAIR - DUSK

ANN is sitting against a rock, further into the cave ... she watches KONG walk in from the LEDGE. The CAVE has spectacular rock formations and a small LAKE. ORANGE EVENING LIGHT streams in from the back on the cave, where FISSURES open out to the other side of the mountain.

KONG squats on his haunches and CLAPS HIS HANDS ... ANN smiles at him.

ANN YAWNS ... KONG copies her YAWN.

ANN
I'm tired ... Sleepy ...

ANN lies down ... KONG lies down beside her like a big baby. ANN looks at KONG'S BIG BLINKING EYES.

She closes her eyes for a moment, attempting to sleep. She opens them ... KONG is still STARING LOVINGLY at her.

ANN (CONT'D)
Sleep ... go to sleep.
(singing softly)
"Lullaby and good night,
Go to bed and sleep tight,
Close your eyes, start to yawn,
Pleasant dreams until dawn."

KONG is captivated.

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

EXT. SKULL MOUNTAIN - PRE-DAWN

A layer of early morning FOG blankets the island ... only the highest JAGGED PEAKS are visible, protruding up through the LAYER OF MIST.

INT. KONG'S LAIR - PRE-DAWN

CLOSE ON: ANN. She wakes up to find herself CRADLED in KONG'S HAND. He is lying on his side, ASLEEP ... holding ANN close to his face like a child would sleep with a teddy bear. KONG stirs, suddenly opening his mouth in a HUGE YAWN. He opens his eyes, and for a few quiet moments, he and ANN stare at each other.

EXT. KONG'S LAIR - DAWN

KONG steps onto the LEDGE and bellows a MIGHTY ROAR across the island.

PULL BACK ... to reveal JACK! He is clinging to the steep mountain-side, about 50 feet below KONG'S LAIR. It is clear that JACK has been pursuing KONG and ANN throughout the night.

KONG vanishes back inside his cave ... JACK hurriedly continues climbing. He ducks into a narrow FISSURE as BAT-THINGS flap overhead. JACK carefully crawls below an OVERHANG to stay out of sight of the CIRCLING CREATURES.

AT THAT MOMENT ... KONG ROARS in PAIN and ANGER! The powerful SOUND echoes out of the CAVE, momentarily freezing JACK in his tracks.

JACK
(worried)
Ann!

JACK climbs towards the BACK ENTRANCE of the CAVE as fast as he can.

INT. KONG'S LAIR - DAWN

CLOSE ON: KONG ROARING ... He is sitting down, leaning on his ELBOWS as ANN digs into his NASTY WOUND with her fingers!

ANN
Hold still!

KONG winces as ANN digs deep and pulls out a blood-covered ALLOSAUR TOE CLAW! She holds it up in front of his nose.

ANN
Look! See!

KONG pulls his lips back in a grimace.

JACK'S POV ... KONG and ANN in the distance. JACK is carefully closing in from the BACK OF THE CAVE.

EXT. KONG'S LAIR - DAWN

KONG paces onto the LEDGE ... he is SNIFFING ... He FROWNS ... suddenly gets AGITATED. KONG looks up ...

... over 20 BAT-THINGS are MASSING on the CLIFFS above the LAIR, clearly preparing an ATTACK!

KONG races into the CAVE, just as another 20 BAT-THINGS flutter in through the BACK ENTRANCE!!

INT. KONG'S LAIR - DAWN

KONG scoops ANN to his breast, ROARING DEFIANTLY at the BAT-THINGS.

CLOSE ON: A NARROW FISSURE in the VOLCANIC ROCK towards the back of the cave. JACK is HIDDEN from view as BAT-THINGS flutter above them.

The BAT-THINGS suddenly ATTACK ENMASS!! They swoop on KONG and ANN like a swarm of giant bees. KONG ROARS and THRASHES OUT at them in the FRENZY! With, every sweep of his ARM, several BAT-THINGS are KNOCKED TO THE GROUND. KONG keeps moving, twisting and turning, to make it harder for them to get at ANN ... she presses herself close to KONG'S CHEST. BAT-THING TALONS strike at her, slashing KONG'S FINGERS instead.

JACK takes his chance to get closer to ANN ... He leaves the shelter of the FISSURE and hurries across the CAVE. He quietly lowers himself into the waters of the LAKE.

SEVERAL BAT-THINGS are gripping and CLAWING KONG'S BACK in an effort to weaken the huge ape ... He suddenly POUNDS HIS BACK against the WALL of the CAVE, SQUASHING THEM ALL!

The surviving BAT-THINGS wheel away from KONG, HISSING ANGRILY ... 16 lie on the cave floor STUNNED or DEAD. They FLUTTER towards the BACK OF THE CAVE, preparing their NEXT ATTACK.

KONG SNARLS ... he places ANN on the CAVE FLOOR - under an OVERHANG - and CHARGES at the BAT-THINGS!

As KONG thunders past the ROCK POOL, JACK surfaces ... he scrambles out, racing towards ANN!

ANN
(amazed)
Jack!!!

JACK EMBRACES ANN!

ANN
Oh Jack!

JACK
Are you ok? Are you hurt?

ANN
I never thought I'd see you again.

JACK signals for her to be quiet ... KONG is preoccupied swotting BAT-THINGS at the BACK OF THE CAVE ... JACK desperately looks around for an ESCAPE ROUTE ... NOTHING but a 1000 foot drop off the LEDGE into the JUNGLE below! They are TRAPPED!

AT THAT MOMENT! A STUNNED BAT-THING beats it's wings and lifts off the CAVERN FLOOR ... JACK RUNS, LEAPS and GRABS IT'S FEET!

JACK
(urgent)
Ann! Quick! Grab my shoulders!

ANN hestitates ... The BAT-THING flaps furiously, trying to lift JACK'S weight off the ground ... It DRAGS JACK towards the EDGE OF THE LEDGE!

JACK
(yelling)
Jump on!

KONG SEES JACK ... HE SCREAMS WITH RAGE!

ANN is TORN ... she looks at JACK ... looks at KONG ...

JACK
(yelling)
ANN!!!

KONG CHARGES TOWARDS THE LEDGE!

ANN makes a decision ... she runs towards JACK and throws herself forward - GRABBING HIS WAIST ... just as KONG REACHES OUT FOR HER!

JACK hangs onto the TALONED FEET as he and ANN sail out into space, the BAT-THING FLAPPING MADLY above them ... They descend rapidly ... about twice the speed of a parachute.

ANN buries her face into JACK'S waist - not wanting to look back at KONG ROARING WITH GRIEF FROM THE LEDGE.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The BAT-THING wobbles crazily in the sky, rapidly LOSING ENERGY ... JACK looks down - a FAST FLOWING RIVER is 50 foot below. He RELEASES HIS GRIP!

ANN SCREAMS as she and JACK fall into the RIVER ... They are immediately picked up by the current and SWEPT AWAY. JACK grabs ANN under the arms and hangs onto her tightly.

JACK and ANN are carried into the RAPIDS.

EXT. SHELTERED POOL - DAY

JACK and ANN are swept down a WATERFALL, surfacing into a FAST-FLOWING, but less violent part of the river.

JACK pulls ANN into a SHELTERED POOL ... she is COUGHING and SPLUTTERING, her arm draped over JACK'S neck.

JACK
Take big breaths - you're ok. You took in some water.

ANN'S breathing becomes easier

JACK
Better?

ANN nods ...

JACK
Look ... I know this is not the time or place ...

ANN
(interrupts)
How far is it to the wall?

JACK
... but I'm gonna say it anyway -

ANN
Can we make it by nightfall?

JACK
I love you, Ann.

ANN
What did you say?

JACK grins.

JACK
I love you! I can't believe I said that. It feels good!

ANN
(skeptical)
Are you serious?

JACK nods ...

CONFUSION ... the ANGER clouds ANN'S face.

ANN
(angry)
Liar!

JACK is SHOCKED.

ANN (CONT'D)
(angry)
You don't love me! This is a game ... some sort of sick game! You don't believe in commitment - remember???

JACK
Yeah ... well, I've changed ...

ANN
Have you?

JACK
(agitated)
Jesus Christ! I went through hell for you! What do I have to do?

ANN
(upset)
I don't know, Jack? What did you think? If you rescued me, I'd be eternally grateful?
(yelling)
Well, it doesn't work like that!

ANN starts HITTING JACK with her FISTS ... she unleashes the TERROR of the last 48 hours in a PUNCHING, SOBBING FRENZY.

ANN
(sobbing)
It doesn't work like that!

JACK slips his arms around her and hugs her tightly ...

JACK
(gently)
Hey, hey ... you're ok ... it's ok ...

After a moment he pulls back and looks at her inquiringly.

ANN looks at him ... her face TEAR STAINED.

ANN
(softly)
I love you, Jack.

ANN gently KISSES HIM.

A DISTANT ROAR!

AN ENRAGED KONG is visible ... quickly descending from his mountain lair!

JACK
Hang onto me.

JACK pushes them back out into the FAST-FLOWING RIVER and they are SWEPT AWAY.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL/NATIVE RUINS - DAY

A BATTLE raging at the NATIVE CITY ... BODIES are strewn around - dozens of NATIVES, SAILORS empaled with spears and arrows. It's like a scene from the movie "Zulu".

A SMALL GROUP of SURVIVORS from the ship are holed up behind STONE BLOCKS atop the GREAT WALL. DENHAM, ENGLEHORN and THREE SAILORS are looking EXHAUSTED and DEFEATED. DENHAM fires at a group of NATIVES with a TOMMY GUN ... it EMPTIES.

ENGLEHORN
(grimly)
That was the last of our ammo.

DENHAM suddenly points across the TREETOPS.

DENHAM
(excited)
They're coming!!

POV: TWO BOATLOADS OF REINFORCEMENTS from the "VENTURE" are rowing towards the beach!

ENGLEHORN
It's too late ...

A MASSIVE TIDE of 200 NATIVES are advancing towards the WALL! DENHAM, ENGLEHORN and the SAILORS reach for whatever WEAPONS they can find.

AT THAT MOMENT!

The GATES SWING OPEN ... JACK and ANN come racing in! In his panic, JACK doesn't notice the BATTLE DEBRIS ... He pushes the GATES closed, yelling for imagined help ...

JACK
(urgent yelling)
Barricade the gates! Quick!

ANN
Jack! ...
(louder)
Jack!!

JACK turns ... is confronted by the sight of 200 NATIVES, charging across the square! 50 NATIVES are coming straight at JACK and ANN, SPEARS RAISED!

JACK and ANN are backed right against the GATES.

KONG ROARS!!! JACK hears his FOOTSTEPS pounding towards the GATES at HIGH SPEED! JACK grabs ANN and pushes her ALONG THE WALL, just clearing the GATES as ...

KONG CRASHES THROUGH! The GATES are SMASHED OFF THEIR HINGES ... 7 story tall gates - weighing 5 tons - land on the NATIVES with a sound like someone stepping on egg-shells!

KONG strides into the SQUARE, BEATING HIS CHEST and ROARING.

DENHAM

Holy shit!

The SURVIVING NATIVES scatter! KONG ramages after them, STOMPING ON THEM and BITING THEIR HEADS OFF ... in a scene that not only gets a PG 13, but the director is PRAISED by the MPAA for his sensitivity!

DENHAM, ENGLEHORN and the SAILORS take their chance to slip away towards the beach.

JACK pulls ANN away from the GATES, slipping behind cover to avoid being seen by KONG ... They run through the GIANT CARVED HEAD ... into the TUNNEL COMPLEX that leads to the beach. JACK snatches a NATIVE SPEAR off the ground on the way.

A few brave NATIVE WARRIORS hurl SPEARS at KONG ... but they either bounce off, or only just penetrate the skin.

KONG picks up a LARGE BRONZE "KONG" STATUE and hurls it at a GROUP of SPEAR THROWERS perched atop a STONE BUILDING.

INT. MUMMY CHAMBER - DAY

JACK and ANN are racing through the MUMMY CHAMBER when the STATUE smashes through the roof! ANN stumbles and ROLLS. KONG ROARS as he SEES HER through the DEMOLISHED ROOF. He reaches for her, SWEEPING MUMMIES onto the floor with his GROPING HANDS.

JACK pulls ANN further down the TUNNELS ...out of KONG'S REACH.

EXT. RUINED CITY - DAY

KONG heads TOWARDS THE BEACH, his way suddenly BLOCKED by 50 NATIVES throwing SPEARS and SHOOTING ARROWS. They thud into his chest ... he pulls them out, CHARGING THE NATIVES in a FURY!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The "VENTURE'S" REINFORCEMENTS arrive on the beach just as DENHAM, ENGLEHORN and the 3 SAILORS come running out of the JUNGLE. Behind them KONG can be seen smashing his way towards the beach!

DENHAM THROWS HIMSELF in one of the BOATS.

DENHAM
(screaming)
Get outta here!

JACK and ANN race out of the TUNNELS and onto the BEACH ... just as KONG CHARGES UP BEHIND THEM! They get halfway across the sand before KONG scoops ANN up triumphantly!

KONG'S AGGRESSION dissipates ... he holds ANN cupped in his hand ... he STROKES HER HAIR with his FOREFINGER.

JACK THROWS THE SPEAR into the BACK of KONG'S LEG, just behind the knee!

KONG ROARS in pain as his leg collapses, sending him SPRAWLING on the sand ... releasing ANN.

JACK
(yelling)
Get him!!!

Before anyone can react, JACK snatches a TOMMY GUN from a SAILOR and aims it at KONG'S HEAD.

ANN
(horrified)
No!!!

JACK FIRES! CLICK ... Gun's EMPTY!

JACK
(yelling)
Come on!

JACK CLUBS KONG'S HEAD with the GUN BUTT ... KONG slumps in PAIN. OTHER SAILORS quickly join JACK, BEATING KONG with GUNS, OARS, even ROCKS. KONG attempts to STRIKE OUT, but quickly COWERS, trying to protect his HEAD.

ANN
(screaming)
Stop! No! Leave him! Stop it, Jack ... No!!

ANN grabs JACK, trying to PULL HIM AWAY ... THUMPING HIM.

ANN
(screaming)
Leave him! Jack!

JACK
(yelling)
Somebody hold her!

KONG'S POV ... ANN being restrained by a SAILOR, TEARS streaming down her face. GROTESQUE FLASHES of SAILOR'S FACES filled with hate - clubbing ... Distorted sound of YELLING ... CLUBBING ... SOUNDS FADE - except for ANN'S VOICE ...

ANN
(sobbing)
I'm sorry ... I'm so sorry ...

A FILM OF WATER washes over KONG'S POV ...

SLOW FADE TO BLACK.

SECONDS LATER ...

CLOSE ON: A FRESH MAGAZINE clicks into a TOMMY GUN. The GUN is COCKED ...

ENGLEHORN aims the GUN at the UNCONSCIOUS KONG'S HEAD. ANN is SOBBING.

DENHAM (O.S)
(yelling)
Hold it! Don't kill him!

ENGLEHORN hesitates as DENHAM rushes over ...

DENHAM
I want him alive!
(excited)
We came to shoot a motion picture, but we could take back something far greater than any movie you could imagine! I can see it now ... his name in lights! "King Kong - the Eighth Wonder of the World"!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BROADWAY/NEW YORK - NIGHT

"KING KONG - the EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD" in HUGE NEON LIGHTS on the marquee of a large Broadway THEATRE.

The STREET is busy, with a LARGE CROWD flocking outside the THEATRE ... TAXI'S unloading PEOPLE in TUXEDOS and EVENING DRESS. The GLITTERATI of NEW YORK have turned out for this one. SCALPERS are selling tickets outside the door.

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The AUDIENCE are settling in their seats ... USHERS working the ailses. It is a GRAND OLD THEATRE with spectacular DECOR and a capacity of about 1200. Tonight is a FULL HOUSE.

An USHER shows an ELDERLY LADY to her seat.

ELDERLY LADY
Is this one of Mr Denham's cute little animal pictures?

USHER
This is not a motion picture, Madam. It's more in the nature of a personal appearance.

A COUPLE are sitting together ... The HUSBAND has clearly come under duress ...

HUSBAND
(checks watch)
The Yankees'll be in the second inning. This had better be worth it!

INT. DENHAM'S OFFICE/THEATRE - NIGHT

TWO BURLY SECURITY GUARDS deliver the BOX OFFICE TAKINGS in cash to DENHAM ... He is dressed in a TUX and looks much rested since his Skull Island adventures.

DENHAM
Thanks fellas.

DENHAM loads the cash into HIS SAFE.

JACK (O.S)
Hey, Denham!

JACK is standing in the office doorway, looking very UNCOMFORTABLE in his TUX.

JACK
Payment in advance. That was the deal.

DENHAM stuffs a WAD OF CASH into an ENVELOPE.

DENHAM
Two grand, Jack. And there's plenty more where that came from! I'm taking Kong on the road ... you could become a permanent part of the show.

JACK shakes his head as he slips the ENVELOPE into his TOP POCKET.

JACK
Not me. I always hated circuses Thought I'd head out west ... get into some Redwood country.

DENHAM
How about Ann? Is she going with you?

JACK tenses up ... but tries to hide his discomfort from Denham.

JACK
Haven't seen her - not since we got back.

DENHAM
She's got a bit of an attitude, that girl. She turned down a bunch of money. Too bad ... it would've been a great angle - "Beauty and the Beast".
(shakes head)
Pity ... I thought you two had something going there.

JACK shrugs ...

JACK
I don't need anyone tagging along with me.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

DENHAM and JACK are walking through a BUSY BACKSTAGE AREA. A PRESS OFFICER runs up to DENHAM.

PRESS OFFICER
The press are clammering to come backstage, Mr Denham! Take some photos of Kong.

DENHAM
Let'em wait. They'll have their opportunity when the curtain goes up!

DENHAM pats JACK on the back.

DENHAM
Are you nervous Jack?

JACK
Nah. Let's get it over with.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The THEATRE is packed ... The AUDIENCE HUSH as the LIGHTS DIM. A GIANT CURTAIN covers the STAGE, with just a single MICROPHONE to one side.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)
(loudspeaker)
Ladies and gentlemen ... Mr Carl Denham!

MUSIC strikes up and the CROWD APPLAUD as DENHAM strides onto the stage in the GLARE of the SINGLE SPOTLIGHT. He steps up to a MIRCOPHONE.

DENHAM
(amplified)
Ladies and gentleman ... If anybody here is of faint disposition, or weak heart I suggest you take this opportunity to leave the auditorium.

The CROWD MURMUR NERVOUSLY ... but of course, NOBODY leaves!

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(amplified)
We all hear tales of adventure we scarcely believe ... but seeing is believing, and tonight you will see Kong - the living proof of our adventure! An adventure in which twenty-two of our party met terrible deaths! Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce you to you the man who felled the mighty beast armed only with a native spear! Mr Jack Driscoll!

BIG APPLAUSE as another SPOTLIGHT finds JACK stepping onto the stage ... His earlier bravado has vanished - he looks VERY NERVOUS! He joins DENHAM at the MIRCOPHONE.

DENHAM
(amplified)
Well, Jack ... what is it like to risk your life to save a beautiful woman?

JACK looks out over a sea of 1200 faces ... he hesitates. DENHAM'S smile wavers as he realises JACK has dried up with stage fright!

DENHAM
(amplified)
Did you fear for your life?

JACK
(long pause)
Yeah.

The AUDIENCE CHUCKLE.

DENHAM
(amplified)
It must have been terrifying?

JACK
(long pause)
Yeah.

The AUDIENCE LAUGH. DENHAM puts his hand over the MIC and whispers angrily at JACK.

DENHAM
(whispers)
A grand a word! Thanks for nothing, pal!

DENHAM turns back to the AUDIENCE ...

DENHAM
(amplified)
Ladies and gentleman! It is now time to see for yourselves ... One who was a King and a God of the world he knew, but who now comes to civilisation as a captive - as an exhibit to gratify mankind's insatiable curiosity. Ladies and gentlemen ... Look upon Kong - the Eighth Wonder of the World!!!

With a dramatic flourish, DENHAM waves his arm at the CURTAIN ... It slowly rises, as MUSIC strikes up.

KONG is REVEALED ... His SITS SLUMPED, HEAD turned away from the AUDIENCE. This is a BOWED, BROKEN SPIRIT ... not the mighty ape we were expecting to see.

JACK looks at KONG with PITY.

His WRISTS are MANACLED, attached by long lengths of THICK CHAIN that lead to the BEAM of the BIG STEEL SCAFFOLD he sits on. Other MANACLES and CHAINS secure his ANKLES and WAIST.

There is BIG GASP from the AUDIENCE ... KONG'S sheer size is SPECTACULAR.

DENHAM looks a little ANXIOUS at KONG'S LETHARGY.

DENHAM
Don't be alarmed, Ladies and Gentleman! Those chains are made of chrome steel!

KONG continues to SIT ... he picks at his TOES. DENHAM steps past JACK, towards the WINGS, WHISPERING to STAGEHANDS ...

DENHAM
(whispering)
Get him on his feet!

INSERT: HUGE ELECTRICAL WINCHES start GRINDING BACKSTAGE ... winding in KONG'S WRIST CHAINS onto big drums.

KONG'S ARMS are pulled up towards the STEEL BEAM ... He is hauled to his feet, arms out-stretched - to APPRECIATIVE MURMURS from the CROWD. His HEAD is slumped.

DENHAM
(amplified)
And now, Mr Driscoll will once again approach the mighty beast armed only with a spear!

A STAGEHAND thrusts a SPEAR into JACK'S HAND. DENHAM walks over to JACK.

JACK
(quietly)
Forget it, Denham. I'm not gonna be part of it.

DENHAM
(angry whisper)
I paid you good money. Damn it - get out there!

JACK
(fierce whisper)
Screw you!

DENHAM snatches the SPEAR out of JACK'S GRASP ... He addresses the AUDIENCE.

DENHAM (CONT'D)
(yelling)
It appears Mr Driscoll has lost his nerve!

The AUDIENCE LAUGH.

DENHAM strides towards KONG ... He prods KONG in the stomach with the SPEAR.

KONG ROARS ... The AUDIENCE LAUGH and APPLAUD ... DISTORTED JEERING FACES.

JACK quietly LEAVES THE STAGE.

DENHAM jabs him in the SIDE ... KONG ROARS and rattles the CHAINS. The AUDIENCE CHEER.

DENHAM edges towards closer, TOUCHING KONG'S LEG.

DENHAM
(yelling)
I am actually laying my hand on the twenty-five foot gorilla. Ladies and gentlemen!
(dramatic)
I am touching the beast!

ANN
(angry yell)
Take your filthy paws off him - you ignorant pig!

DENHAM looks ALARMED as ANN strides down the AISLE from the BACK of the THEATRE.

KONG RECOGNISES ANN! He ROARS and pulls on his CHAINS.

DENHAM races over to the MIC in an attempt to pass this off as part of the show.

DENHAM
(amplified)
Ladies and gentlemen! Miss Ann Darrow ... the bravest girl I have ever known!

The CONFUSED AUDIENCE starts to APPLAUD ...

ANN
(angry yell)
Show's over everybody! Go home!

The APPLAUSE dies away.

ANN (CONT'D)
(angry yell)
What are you waiting for? You've seen the big monkey humiliated. Go on ... go home!

Nobody moves.

ANN
(screaming)
Get the hell out of here!!!

DENHAM
(amplified nervous chuckle)
Now Ann ...

SOME PEOPLE STAND and STEP into the AISLES, but nobody actually leaves ... all eyes are on ANN as she bounds up ONSTAGE ...

ANN
You're hurting him - let him down!
(louder)
Let him down!

ANN hurries over to KONG ... he is VERY AGITATED. She gently STROKES HIS LEG.

ANN
(gentle)
It's ok. You're going to be ok. I'm not going to let them hurt you.

DENHAM whispers BACKSTAGE.

DENHAM
(excited whisper)
Get the press in ... This is great!

ANN has EYE CONTACT WITH KONG ... he is CALMING DOWN.

A NOISY MOB of 50 JOURNALISTS and PHOTOGRAPHERS suddenly stream onto the STAGE.

DENHAM
Here's your angle, boys: "Beauty tames the Beast"!

FLASHBULBS POP ... A BABBLE OF QUESTIONS are thrown at ANN:

JOURNALIST'S BABBLE
Smile Ann! Have you got a pet name for the monkey? What does he eat? Come a little closer, Miss Darrow!

ANN
(yelling)
Bugger off!

DENHAM grabs her arm ... Without breaking his GRIN, he hisses in her ear ...

DENHAM
(angry whisper)
Just a couple of photos, you ungrateful little bitch!

DENHAM drags ANN away from KONG! He ROARS! FLASHBULBS POP! ANN starts PROTESTING ... KONG is getting ANXIOUS .. flinching against the CONSTANT FLASHES. DISTORTED JOURNALIST'S FACES ...

JOURNALISTIC BABBLE
Smile Ann! ... Smile!

DENHAM
Come on Ann - Snap out of it!

DENHAM SLAPS HER ON THE CHEEK ... ANN FLINCHES

A DEAFENING ROAR!!! DENHAM looks up AWESTRUCK as KONG STARTS TEARING FREE of his CHAINS in SLOW MOTION!!!

The AUDIENCE SCREAM and PANIC ... The JOURNALISTS SCATTER, sweeping ANN off the STAGE, into the STALLS.

With a MIGHTY FLOURISH, KONG rips off the WAIST RESTRAINTS and IS FREE! The AUDIENCE are BLOCKING the EXITS in their PANIC ... The THEATRE is PACKED!

The STAGE has cleared apart from DENHAM who stands mesmerised by KONG ... he steps back fearfully, falling on his bottom. KONG BEATS HIS CHEST, ROARS ... and STEPS ONTO DENHAM!! DENHAM'S ARMS and LEGS SPASM beneath KONG'S FOOT as he is GROUND INTO OBLIVION!

KONG LEAPS from the stage into the FRONT ROWS ... He STOMPS and RIPS UP SEATS - with people still in them!

ANN is in danger of being CRUSHED BY THE CROWD who are FLOODING TOWARDS a SIDE EXIT DOOR ... She falls under feet ... JACK suddenly pulls her up and hugs her as the TIDE pushes them towards the door.

ANN
Let me go!

KONG is below the BALCONY LEVEL ... He uses AMAZING STRENGTH to PUSH THE BALCONY UP, sending DOZENS OF PEOPLE plummeting into the STALLS. He THROWS a HUGE PIECE of BALCONY at a CROWD OF PANICKING PEOPLE.

KONG sees ANN and JACK stream out of the EXIT DOOR to the street beyond ...

EXT. BROADWAY - NIGHT

JACK pulls ANN - CRYING and PROTESTING - down the SIDEWALK.

Behind them, the VAST THEATRE WALL explodes onto the street, showering PEOPLE and CARS with BRICKS and STEEL ... KONG strides into the MIDDLE OF THE ROAD!!!

CARS drive into KONG'S LEGS ... he smashes his fists onto their ROOFS. OTHER CARS pile into each other ... into SHOP FRONTAGES - it's MAJOR PANIC TIME.

CAR WINDSCREEN POV ... KONG STOMPS on the CAR in FRONT, LIFTS FOOT and STOMPS over CAMERA.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

JACK hurries down an ALLEY, still towing ANN. She is ANGRY ... TEARFUL.

JACK
Come on ... come on! We gotta keep moving!

ANN
(sobbing)
He's gonna die! They'll kill him!

JACK
You bet they're gonna kill him. Your Goddamn gorilla is destroying the city!

JACK grabs ANN'S HAND.

JACK (CONT'D)
He's a monster ... can't you see that!

She pulls away from JACK.

ANN
(quietly)
I'm going to him!

JACK blocks her path.

ANN (CONT'D)
(angry)
Get out of my way!

ANN KICKS and PUNCHES HIM!

JACK
No, Ann ...

JACK suddenly socks ANN on the JAW ... she collapses into his arms!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

JACK runs - with ANN SLUNG OVER HIS SHOULDER - towards a CAB in the middle of A BUSY STREET - TRAFFIC is snarled up due to KONG'S rampage a couple of blocks away - although there is no sign of KONG on this street.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

JACK slides ANN into the CAB.

JACK
(urgent)
Get the hell outta here!

CAB DRIVER
Listen buddy ... I can only go as fast as the guy in front!
(honks horn)
What is this ... Is the president in town?

JACK
There's a twenty-five foot gorilla on the loose.

Looking from the BACKSEAT as the CAB DRIVER turns to JACK.

CAB DRIVER
And I'm Rudolph Valentino!

KONG STRIDES INTO THE STREET AHEAD!

CLOSE ON: CAB DRIVER'S face as he sees KONG! Without hesitation, he leaps out of the CAB and flees into the night!

POV from BACKSEAT OF CAB ... As KONG comes closer - OVERTURNING CARS and SMASHING HIS FISTS on them. PANICKED DRIVERS PILE into each other. JACK desperately tries his door, but they are WEDGED IN by CARS either side.

KONG LIFTS THE CAR directly in front - HIGH ABOVE HIS HEAD, throwing it into a BUILDING.

JACK clambers over the FRONT SEAT ... as KONG leans over his CAB - LIFTING IT UP!

KONG'S HUGE EYES glance in the WINDOW as he prepares to THROW THE CAB ... He sees ANN!

EXT/INT. STREETS/CAB - NIGHT

ROARING with TRIUMPH, KONG gently lowers the CAB down.

CLOSE ON: JACK'S FOOT depresses ACCELERATOR.

The WHEELS are SPINNING WILDLY at the moment the CAB touches down on the STREET ... In a CLOUD OF BURNING RUBBER, the CAB rips free of KONG'S GRIP, speeding down the ROAD, weaving in and out of the path cut by KONG'S DESTRUCTION.

KONG BOUNDS AFTER THE CAB, running on FOURS with incredible speed.

JACK crosses an INTERSECTION, driving up on the SIDEWALK to get a CLEARER DRIVING LANE ... PEDESTRIANS scatter - not only from the CAB, but from KONG who is in HOT PURSUIT.

The CAB SLEWS across the STREET, disappearing up a TINY ALLEY, only just wide enough for the CAB, but TOO NARROW for KONG.

JACK glances back at KONG ROARING with frustration at the ALLEY ENTRANCE.

EXT/INT. HERALD SQ/CAB - NIGHT

JACK speeds out of the ALLEY and CROSSES the TRAFFIC FLOW, causing much BRAKING and HORN action. He gets SLOWED in THICK TRAFFIC ...

KONG LEAPS from a 7 STORY BUILDING onto the street ... RIGHT IN FRONT OF JACK'S CAB!!!

JACK SWERVES onto the SIDEWALK, accelerating straight through a PLATEGLASS DISPLAY WINDOW into ...

INT. MACYS - NIGHT

MACYS DEPARTMENT STORE!!!

ANN groggily WAKES ... as JACK steers the CAB wildly through AISLES of CLOTHING, scattering SHOPPERS in all directions!

KONG CRASHES INTO the SHOP in PURSUIT! The 15 foot height is too low for him to stand, but he BOUNDS ALONG on his KNUCKLES.

JACK sends the CAB into a couple of TIGHT TURNS ... at the speed KONG is travelling, he SLIDES on the POLISHED FLOORS at each turn, wiping out an area the size of a tennis court before regaining his grip.

JACK rounds a bend and DRIVES straight into a CAMPING EQUIPMENT DISPLAY! TENTS collapse - covering the CAB, before it SLAMS into a WALL. JACK and ANN are thrown forward on IMPACT.

KONG slides around the corner and BOUNDS PAST THE COVERED CAB ... He desperately looks around for JACK and ANN ... getting ANXIOUS and ENRAGED! KONG smashes his way out of MACYS, into 35th STREET.

ANN rises in the back seat.

JACK
Are you ok? Ann?

ANN climbs out of the car and HEADS TOWARDS THE STREET!

ANN
Goodbye Jack ...

JACK runs after her.

JACK
Ann!

EXT. 35th STREET - NIGHT

ANN walks into the middle of the road ...

ANN
He won't harm me ...
(yelling)
Kong!

KONG is 50 yards away ... he sees ANN, ROARS and WALKS TOWARDS her on his KNUCKLES.

JACK runs up to ANN.

JACK
(highly emotional)
Ann! I need you ... I wanna be with you ... I love you, Ann.

ANN stares at him for a long moment ... KONG is looming up behind her.

ANN
(gently)
No Jack ... you don't know what love is.

KONG'S HAND gently lifts her up ... he very GENTLY STROKES HER HAIR ... a TENDER LOOK on his face.

JACK looks up at the HUGE GORILLA holding ANN, a mixture of AWE and SHOCK on his face.

ANN
It's alright Jack ... it's alright.

JACK watches ANN disappear into the night ...

... he slides down the wall of the EMPTY STREET, head in hands, SOBBING LOUDLY.

EXT. MID-TOWN/STREETS & ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

KONG is moving along a ROOFTOP - about 10 STORIES HIGH. He is holding ANN close to his breast. He looks down at the STREETS - now largely DESERTED. All around him the MANHATTAN SKYLINE resembles some GAUDY PRIMEVAL LANDSCAPE.

KONG gently puts ANN down, looking LOVINGLY at her ... He suddenly ROLLS OVER PLAYFULLY!

ANN
No, Kong!

KONG CLAPS HIS HANDS.

ANN
(upset)
No time for play ...

KONG looks at ANN, not understanding ... A SEARCHLIGHT BEAM swings onto him. KONG goes to the EDGE of the BUILDING and ROARS ANGRILY at the MOBILE SEARCHLIGHT 100 feet below.

ANN
(alarmed)
No!

AT THAT MOMENT!

BAM! BAM! BAM! ... HEAVY MACHINE GUN FIRE RICHOCHETS all around. KONG ROARS as BULLETS GRAZE HIS SHOULDER! ...

KONG SCOOP ANN UP and runs!

ANN clutches his FINGERS as he BOUNDS along the ROOFS at HIGHSPEED! A SEARCHLIGHT suddenly swings onto KONG from BELOW ...

ARMY VEHICLES are RACING along the QUIET STREETS ... An ARMOURED CAR is firing at KONG ... followed by a TRUCK carrying a MOBILE SEARCHLIGHT.

The STREETS are TEEMING with these VEHICLES as the ARMY spreads out across town in the hunt for KONG.

As BULLETS WHIZZ around him, KONG LEAPS ACROSS THE STREET - 10 stories high! He LANDS on the opposite ROOFTOP and BOUNDS AWAY ...

ANOTHER SEARCHLIGHT FINDS HIM! ... And ANOTHER! The ARMY are closing in. MACHINE GUN FIRE rips past him as he LEAPS another GREAT DISTANCE across the STREET. ANN clings on, her EYES TIGHTLY SHUT.

ARMORED CARS and MOBILE SEARCHLIGHTS converge on KONG ... He has RUN OUT OF ROOFTOP ... ahead of him, across the CAVERN of 34th STREET, rises the SHEER WALL of the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING!!!

KONG leaps across the CHASM, crashing into the SIDE of the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING! GLASS RAINS DOWN 12 STORIES TO THE STREET as KONG uses WINDOWS for HAND AND FOOT HOLDS. He is ONE-HANDED - his other hand still holding ANN protectively to his CHEST.

FOUR SEARCHLIGHTS swing onto KONG ... A MOBILE ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN screeches to a HALT on 34th STREET - this is obviously the army's KILLING WEAPON OF CHOICE.

Within seconds the LARGE GUN TARGETS KONG ...

POV: Looking up CROSSHAIRS at KONG, high on the side of the building - a total SITTING DUCK.

GUNNER
Ready to fire, sir!

COMMANDER
How many points do we get for a big monkey?

The GUNNERS LAUGH ... the COMMANDER raises his BINOCULARS to watch the spectacle.

COMMANDER
Stand by ...

AT THAT MOMENT ... KONG ROARS DEFIANTLY at the SOLDIERS, swinging ANN out over the street.

COMMANDER
(shocked)
Hold your fire! He's carrying a woman!!

The ORDER is shouted down the STREET to the ASSEMBLING SOLDIERS.

SERGEANTS
(yelling)
Hold your fire!!!

KONG carefully places ANN on his BROAD SHOULDER ... she GRABS HOLD OF HIS FUR.

The MILITARY watch helplessly as KONG starts climbing the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

CUT TO:

EXT. 39th STREET - NIGHT

JACK is several blocks away, unaware of the situation at the Empire State Building.

He wanders down an EMPTY STREET ... a few ABANDONED CARS are dotted around, but all is QUIET. His shoulders are slumped, his stride falters ... he looks like a BROKEN MAN.

A VEHICLE APPROACHES ...

JACK turns as a MILITARY POLICE CAR pulls up along side him.

MP
For Chrissake buddy! Get your ass inside - there's a goddamn gorilla on the loose!

JACK doesn't react ... he keeps on walking.

MP
(angry)
Hey! Did you hear me, mister?

A 2nd MILITARY POLICE VEHICLE pulls up ...

CLOSE ON: A STREET URCHIN watches from the shadows.

2nd MP
Hey Bill ... you gotta hear this! The stupid ape's climbing up the Empire State carrying a goddamn woman on his shoulder! They're dispatching Naval planes from Wrights Field at dawn. Guess the boys want a little target practice! Orders are to blow the son of a bitch away as soon as he puts the girl down!

The 2nd VEHICLE ROARS AWAY ...

CLOSE ON: JACK, still walking as the 1st MILITARY POLICE VEHICLE cruises up along side ...

MP
Do ya want a tip, buddy? Get yourself down to Fifth Avenue ... When they blow that stinkin' piece of shit off the building there'll be bits of gorilla all over the street! It'll take the sanitation department a week to clean it up!

The MP LAUGHS LOUDLY as the VEHICLE ROARS AWAY, leaving JACK alone in the street. He is outside a CINEMA - showcasing some new epic movie about World War One Flying Aces. An overly romanticized POSTER features a Jean Harlow type in an embrace with a pilot.

The STREETS are wet ... LIGHTS glisten off the surface. JACK pauses - glancing at the reflection ...

POV: WET STREET ... the UNDERSIDE OF AN AIRPLANE is reflected in the water!

JACK slowly looks up ...

TWO OLD AIRPLANES have been strung high across the street to promote the movie ... a FOKKER TRIPLANE ... and a SOPWITH CAMEL!

CLOSE ON: JACK'S REACTION ...

CUT TO:

The SOPWITH CAMEL lands with a bounce on the street! JACK has released the support ropes ... he hurries over to the PLANE, quickly assessing it's condition.

KID (O.S)
That thing can't fly, mister!

JACK is surprised to see the little AFRICAN-AMERICAN URCHIN - about 8 years - emerge from the shadows. He is clearly HOMELESS.

KID (CONT'D)
They wouldn't hang it on wires if it was still working.

JACK is peering into the cockpit.

JACK
I'm not so sure, kid.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING/MANHATTAN - PRE DAWN

WIDE SHOT ... KONG climbing the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, silhouetted against the LIGHTENING SKY. He is nearing the top.

LOOKING DOWN ... ANN clings to KONG'S SHOULDER, a DIZZYING 1000 foot drop to the street below.

KONG scales the final 130 feet of the Empire State Building - the airship mooring mast - and CLIMBS ONTO the STEEL DOME AT the TOP. He gently places ANN down on the LIP and STANDS on TWO LEGS ...

WIDER ... KONG BEATS HIS CHEST, ROARING DEFIANTLY!

WIDER ... KONG is a SPECK on the summit of the HUGE building.

A LAYER of EARLY MORNING FOG blankets Manhattan ... only the TALLEST BUILDINGS are visible, protruding up through the LAYER OF MIST.

His ROAR ECHOES over the city.

EXT. 39th STREET - DAWN

KONG'S ROAR reaches JACK ... he pauses for a moment, then hurries to the PLANE, carrying a CONTAINER OF PETROL he has just SIPHONED from a CAR.

KID
They used to fly these in the war, mister.

JACK
Is that right?

JACK pours PETROL into the plane's GAS TANK.

KID
Are you gonna start it up?

JACK
Yeah.

KID
Are you gonna kill the gorilla? I wanna see him fall off the building!

JACK
You don't wanna be talking like that.

KID
But he's bad!

JACK pauses ... he kneels down in front of the kid.

JACK
(sadly)
He ain't bad, kid ... He doesn't know how to be bad.

The KID looks at JACK QUIZZICALLY.

Jack reacts to the SOUND of DISTANT PLANE ENGINES.

JACK
Go give the propeller a couple of turns - nice and slowly ... Quick now!

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING/MANHATTAN - DAWN

Looking at MANHATTAN from the HARBOR ... The Empire State Building rises from the MIDTOWN area like a giant solitary finger, reaching for the heavens.

4 NAVAL BIPLANES suddenly ROAR INTO SHOT, sweeping low over the DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT ... and closing in on KONG. These are TWO-SEATERS, armed with TWIN MACHINE-GUNS for the PILOT, and a flexible MACHINE GUN for the OBSERVER.

A COLD WIND blows ANN'S hair as she stands on the lip of the dome, watching the PLANES approach. KONG is UNEASY about these BUZZING PREDATORS as they CIRCLE above him.

CLOSE ON: NAVAL PLANE COCKPIT ... the LEAD PILOT talks to the others via an RT.

LEAD PILOT
(over RT)
Here we go, boys!

The NAVAL PLANES peel off into an ATTACKING DIVE at KONG.

DOWN GUNSIGHTS ... drifting left and right as KONG grows in size ... LOCKED ON!

CLOSE ON: PILOT'S FINGER on trigger.

KONG is suddenly FEARFUL ... he INSTINCTIVELY REACHES FOR ANN, holding her protectively!

LEAD PILOT
(over RT)
Pull out! Pull out! He has the girl!

The PLANES split to either side of KONG, ZOOMING close by with a deafening roar.

EXT. 39th STREET - DAWN

CLOSE ON ... The SOPWITH CAMEL'S Gnome rotary engine SPINS, COUGHS and DIES.

JACK is at the FRONT of the PLANE, desperately SPINNING the PROPELLOR with both hands, trying to kick the plane into life. The KID is sitting in the cockpit.

JACK
(urgent)
Flick the switch again!

JACK SPINS THE PROP ... the engine COUGHS, blows out a CLOUD OF BLACK SMOKE ... and ROARS INTO LIFE!!

JACK lifts the KID out and clambers into the cockpit! The engine NOISE is LOUD ... propeller wash blasts his hair and clothes.

KID
(yelling)
Hey mister! You dropped this!

The KID picks up JACK'S ENVELOPE - containing the 2 grand - off the road. He offers it to JACK.

KID (CONT'D)
(yelling)
You wanna be more careful.

JACK hesitates ... he SMILES at the KID.

JACK
(yelling)
It's your lucky day, kid! Stand back!

The KID steps back, clutching the ENVELOPE as JACK OPENS THE THROTTLE. The ENGINE WINDS UP and the SOPWITH CAMEL starts moving down 39th street!

It BUILDS UP SPEED VERY QUICKLY, racing past ABANDONED CARS and BUILDINGS ... The TAIL LIFTS OFF THE GROUND ...

SUDDENLY!

A MILITARY VEHICLE DRIVES across an INTERSECTION directly in front of the PLANE! JACK pulls back on the stick and the SOPWITH CAMEL LURCHES INTO THE AIR! It SKIMS over the VEHICLE, CLIMBING into the air rapidily!

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING/MANHATTAN - DAWN

KONG is getting ANGRY at the BUZZING PLANES circling around him ... He puts ANN DOWN on the DOME!

ANN
(yelling)
No! Pick me up! Kong!

KONG ROARS at the PLANES, as if issuing a CHALLENGE.

The LEAD PILOT waves to the OTHER PLANES.

LEAD PILOT
(over RT)
Ok ... this time! Here we go ...

The NAVAL PLANES PEEL AWAY for the ATTACK ... They dive towards KONG ... lining him up in their sights ...

KONG ROARS at them ... ANN is screaming ...

ANN
NO!!!

AT THAT MOMENT ... JACK'S SOPWITH CAMEL zooms right past KONG and ANN, flying STRAIGHT AT THE NAVAL PLANES!!! JACK is VISIBLE in the cockpit, HAIR BLOWING in the wind.

ANN
(yelling)
Jack??

The NAVAL PLANES are forced to SCATTER in ALL DIRECTIONS as the tiny SOPWITH CAMEL meets them HEAD-ON!!

JACK TURNS TIGHTLY and flies at the REGROUPING NAVAL PLANES, sending them into disarray!

LEAD PILOT
(over RT)
Go for the ape! Go for the ape!

The 4 NAVAL PLANES fly at KONG from different directions! MACHINE GUNS START FIRING! JACK throws his plane around like a MADMAN, trying to deflect their AIM.

KONG ROARS, and SNATCHES at the NAVAL PLANES as they ZOOM by ... he FLINCHES as he is HIT BY BULLETS! ANN SCREAMS!

JACK DIVES at a NAVAL PLANE, causing it to TURN SHARPLY - straight into KONG'S GRIP! KONG grabs the NAVAL PLANE, RIPPING IT'S WINGS OFF! He hurls it down towards the street!

JACK nearly collides with the LEAD PILOT, who desperately veers away!

LEAD PILOT
(over RT)
Let's take this guy out!

The 3 REMAINING NAVAL PLANES OPEN FIRE on JACK ... he DODGES around the SKY, avoiding STREAMS OF TRACER FIRE.

JACK steers his CAMEL towards KONG with the 3 NAVAL PLANES hot on his tail ... the NAVAL PILOTS focus on lining JACK up in their sights - just as he BARREL ROLLS past KONG.

The NAVAL PILOTS suddenly realise JACK has led them DANGEROUSLY CLOSE to KONG ... they VEER AWAY, but it's TOO LATE for one NAVAL PLANE! KONG swipes at it, CONNECTING with enough force to SHATTER IT'S TAIL SECTION!

The CRIPPLED PLANE COLLIDES INTO IT'S COMPANION, sending BOTH PLANES tumbling towards the street! PARACHUTES balloon out.

The LAST NAVAL PLANE - flown by the LEAD PILOT - zooms after JACK!

JACK rolls his SOPWITH CAMEL into a terrifyingly STEEP DIVE down the side of the CHRYSLER BUILDING!

The NAVAL PLANE follows JACK as he pulls out of the dive and weaves amongst the MEDIUM-RISE BUILDINGS of 5th & 6th AVENUE. JACK flies straight at AN ADVERTISING BANNER strung across the street ... he carefully COLLECTS IT with his WHEELS, ripping it away from the buildings!

JACK rolls his CAMEL upside down, releasing the BANNER ... The NAVAL PLANE flies into it, BLOCKING THE LEAD PILOT'S VIEW!

The NAVAL PLANE smashes into the side of a BUILDING!

JACK zooms VICTORIOUSLY past the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

ANN
(yelling)
Jack!!!

TEARS of JOY stream down her face as JACK "BUZZES" her and KONG. He waves at ANN.

AT THAT MOMENT ...

BULLETS RIDDLE JACK'S PLANE! As the Sopwith Camel disintegrates, 12 BOEING P26 FIGHTER PLANES ROAR PAST!

These are heavily armed aluminium monoplane fighters - state-of-the-art killing machines.

ANN SCREAMS!

JACK has no control of the CAMEL ... it CARTWHEELS out of the sky ... JACK knows it's all over.

CRUUMMP!!! KONG GRABS JACK'S PLANE!! He holds the WINGS, stopping the PLANE in MID-FALL! The shattered FUSELAGE suddenly splinters away from the wings, slipping from KONG'S GRASP ... For a MOMENT the FUSELAGE - with JACK - tumbles away from KONG, towards the street!

WRECKAGE hits the top of the BUILDING, causing the FUSELAGE to jerk to a SUDDEN HALT ... JACK FALLS OUT OF THE COCKPIT ... slides down the length of the FUSELAGE, and just manages to GRAB THE RUDDER!

JACK dangles a 1000 feet above 5th AVENUE ... The FUSELAGE swinging from 2 lengths of RIGGING WIRE snagged on the DOME!

ANN
(shocked)
JACK!!!

ANN rushes to the EDGE of the DOME, but JACK is way out of reach ... The RUDDER starts to BREAK AWAY!

KONG'S HAND suddenly GRABS JACK, lifting him to SAFETY!

He places JACK gently next to ANN ... KONG watches as they EMBRACE.

The P26'S are CIRCLING in the DISTANCE, preparing for an ATTACK RUN. KONG looks FEARFUL ... he is WEAKENING from his BULLET WOUNDS.

ANN gently breaks away from JACK and KONG PICKS ANN UP. JACK can only watch as KONG TENDERLY HOLDS HER ... the great ape is clearly in PAIN ... yet he looks mesmerised at ANN as her long blonde hair blows in the wind.

The P26'S turn towards KONG and form a straight line.

LEAD PILOT
(over RT)
We are ignoring the girl! Repeat: The girl is expendable. She's going down with the ape! Here we go!

The NAVAL PLANES start their ATTACK RUN!

JACK can see what's coming ...

JACK
(desperate yell)
Ann! They are going to shoot! Ann!

KONG looks down at JACK ...

He very gently lowers ANN and returns her to JACK. JACK HOLDS ANN tenderly as she starts SOBBING.

KONG looks FEARFULLY AT THE APPROACHING PLANES ... He is BREATHING in GASPS ... very DISTRESSED.

ANN
Kong! Look at me! ... please!

KONG turns to ANN ... He gently touches her hair. She clutches his FINGERS, hugging them, trying to COMFORT HIM. TEARS STREAM DOWN HER FACE ...

ALL SOUND FADES AWAY ... except for a gentle breeze ...

ANN
(singing softly)
Lullaby ... and goodnight,
Go to bed and sleep tight ...

The FEAR leaves KONG ... he looks at ANN with TENDERNESS and LOVE. She fights back the urge to burst into tears.

ANN (CONT'D)
(singing softly)
Close your eyes, start to yawn,
Pleasant dreams until ...

CLOSE ON: KONG ... he SUDDENLY WINCES.

SOUND CRASHES BACK IN ... with the DEAFENING ROAR of the PLANES flying past.

For one last precious second ANN HUGS KONG'S HAND ... he slowly topples back ... disappearing off the side of the building.

ANN SOBS with GRIEF ... JACK gently takes her in his arms ... she buries her face in his chest.

INT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

OFFICE WORKERS and PEDESTRIANS are streaming through the LOBBY, heading towards 5th AVENUE.

The ELEVATOR doors open ... JACK and ANN step into the LOBBY, walking AGAINST THE FLOW.

JACK
(gently)
Don't look, Ann ... Take my hand and don't look back.

He wraps his ARM around her ... she buries her face against his shoulder, TEARS OF GRIEF silently running down her face.

As JACK and ANN disappear into the crowd, they pass an OLD LADY.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - MORNING

CROWDS are gathering to STARE at KONG'S BODY.

A POLICEMAN ushers people away ...

POLICEMAN
Come on folks ... it's all over. The airplane's got him.

PUSH IN ... to the OLD LADY standing in the crowd. She shakes her head sadly ...

OLD LADY
It wasn't the airplanes ... it was beauty killed the beast.

The OLD LADY turns and slowly walks away from CAMERA.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END